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Inquiry tackles clothes and computers

Traders who overcharge to be fined

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

A NATIONWIDE assault on high prices was promised by the Government yesterday as part of a package to boost competition and enterprise.

The Trade Secretary is taking new powers to tackle retailers and utility companies who charge more for their goods than their counterparts do overseas, and companies face heavy fines if they breach anti-competitive rules.

Computers, electrical goods, designer clothes and watches are among goods that will be examined – as will electricity standing charges, which can add up to 20 per cent of bills. Cars, supermarkets and private medicine are already under investigation.

The results will be made public with the Department of Trade and Industry naming and shaming goods that cost much more here than abroad.

Stephen Byers will then call on his powers, which no previous Trade Secretary has used, to ask the Director-General of Fair Trading John Bridgeman to investigate specific prices.

Under the Competition Act, companies can be fined up to 10 per cent of their UK turnover if they are found to have engaged in anti-competitive practices and failed to remedy them.

Announcing his plans to the Commons, Mr Byers said that there was widespread concern that customers in Britain had to pay more than people in other countries for similar goods.

He was also asking the energy regulator to investigate widely varying standing charges imposed by electricity companies. These account for 13 per cent of typical bill, but can reach 20 per cent for low users.

The results of the investigation would be taken into account the next time electricity prices were negotiated, and he wanted the regulator to ensure that the poor and elderly were not being disadvantaged.

Mortgage companies, too, would have to give clearer information on charges, fees and rates so that it would be easier for borrowers to make a choice and calculate how much their home loan would really cost.

But John Redwood, the Shadow Trade Secretary, complained that it had taken the



Government two years to realise the importance of bringing down prices. He described the international study as a "poor man's Whitch" to tell us how much we are suffering."

There was no evidence that the Government was the "customers' friend", he said, and Gordon Brown had pushed up prices by raising duty on petrol.

He told Mr Byers: "I do hope that when drawing up

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his list of sinners that need referral for high pricing, he will refer the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He is the main offender when it comes to petrol and diesel prices.

"He is the main offender when it comes to the haulage industry, and I hope he will take responsibility for the problems the motorist is now experiencing."

Mr Redwood claimed it had taken the Government two years to realise prices should be lower and monopolies broken. "The Conservatives broke monopolies and introduced competition on an industry by industry basis."

"The Government has spent two years talking about competition but has done nothing significant to further it. All it has done is it has put up business costs and put up business prices."

He said: "There is absolutely no evidence that this Government is the consumer's friend. They talk about being so, they spin that they are, but they fuck the decisions necessary to actually bring the prices down."

Mr Byers also announced that he would be injecting 100 million of new money into the creation of small business service. The new service, to be headed by a high-profile chief executive, would offer advice on matters such as exports and payroll, while acting a voice for small businesses in Whitehall.



Budget leaflet 'is hiding tax rises'

By ROLAND WATSON, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

GORDON BROWN'S presentation of the Budget was last night referred to the public spending watchdog amid claims that the Chancellor was misleading millions of voters.

Francis Maude, the Shadow Chancellor, claimed that a leaflet explaining Budget measures for the public and produced with taxpayers' money amounted to "Labour Party propaganda".

He complained that it omitted to mention a series of tax rises and masked others with "half-truth" euphemisms.

Some 1.5 million copies of the document are to be distributed to libraries, Post Offices, schools and universities at a cost of £100,000. Mr Brown is seeking authority to send a similar leaflet to all 26 million British households next year.

Mr Maude complained that the eight-page document, titled "Budget 99", builds a completely misleading view of it. It reads like a Labour Party propaganda sheet, [and] is full of half-truths."

A Treasury spokesman said the leaflet gave a phone number and Internet address for those who wanted to find out more.

The new energy tax on businesses, to come in from 2001,

is described as a "climate change levy". And those earning more than £26,000 a year — whose National Insurance contributions have been raised — are described as "paying a fairer share".

There is no mention of the scrapping of the 20p income tax band or the 0.5 per cent increase in stamp duty for house sales of more than £250,000.

The Shadow Chancellor has written to Sir John Bourn, the Comptroller and Auditor-General, asking if the leaflet is a proper use of public money.

He has also written to Sir Andrew Turnbull, Permanent Secretary at the Treasury, to ask if the leaflet is an accurate description of the Budget.

Mr Maude said: "This is the most dishonest Budget ever and this leaflet gives a completely misleading view of it. It reads like a Labour Party propaganda sheet, [and] is full of half-truths."

A Treasury spokesman said the leaflet gave a phone number and Internet address for those who wanted to find out more.

As a result of the lower clas-

sification, Crisp was known as a "trustee" and was moved from the main part of the jail to a special unit. He fled from there by climbing out of a skylight and scaling a ladder lowered by accomplices into the prison grounds from the top of a 20ft high perimeter fence.

Crisp, 36, of Hucknall in Nottinghamshire, was serving eight and a half years for rape, arson and intimidation. After the rape, he poured petrol through his victim's letter box and set her house on fire. He also wrote threatening to "scar her pretty little face".



Crisp: "trustee" status

Rapist climbs jail wall

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

A RAPIST who bombarded his victim with threatening letters and set fire to her house escaped from prison yesterday, seven months after being made a "trusted" inmate.

Alan Crisp's victim and witnesses at his trial were given police protection last night as a row broke out over the decision to lower his security classification.

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As a result of the lower clas-

ford have won the past 13 meetings, making the antagonism between the two universities particularly intense.

The arguments continued last night at the Guildhall, Cambridge, where £80 had paid a total of £10,000 to watch the annual match. The ABA insisted that there had to be a weigh-in with their officials present.

Oxford had arrived in Cambridge at lunchtime and had weighed in front of the Cambridge University secretary.

But this was not good enough for the ABA: it would have refused to sanction a match without proper weigh-ins.

The Dark Blues had spent the afternoon rehydrating and eating, and clearly their body weights were higher than their Cambridge counterparts.

Eventually, after 14 hours of bitter arguments, it was agreed that the match, which had never been cancelled before except in war-time in its 102-year history, would go ahead, but only within the approved weight bands of the ABA.

Both sides agreed that there would be eight contests, with Oxford forfeiting the lightweight category because their man, John Banks, was too heavy.

First tango in Buenos Aires for Prince and the showgirl

FROM ALAN HAMILTON IN BUENOS AIRES

ARGENTINA does strange things to Princes of Wales. It must be the influence of hot Latin blood that loosens the strings of their tight northern European inhibitions.

At the height of a delicate mission to mend fences with our former adversary, Charles allowed himself to be lured onto a Buenos Aires dance floor to make a creditable attempt at that most blatantly sexual dance, the tango. It was a diplomatic masterstroke.

The Prince had just delivered a surprisingly pointed speech on the Falkland Islanders' right to self-determination at a banquet hosted by President Menem in the capital's grandest hotel, when the company moved to a side room to enjoy a cabaret performed by a popular local tango troupe.

Bold as brass, Adriana Vasile, a lissome member of the troupe, asked the Prince if he would care to tango; it does, after all, take two. "Will you teach me?" he asked with an enthusiasm undimmed by his lack of the obligatory black gouchi hat. Schiora Vasile was only too happy to oblige.

Dressed for the occasion in a shockingly but necessarily split skirt, she led the Prince through the Ninth of July and Don Juan. He was a little stiff; the dance and a lifetime of polo injuries do not sit naturally together. But he undoubtedly gave it his best, well aware that the cameras were on him. Enjoyment was written all over his face.

His teacher was generous in her praise, knowing that she was destined for instant celebrity. "He didn't know how to tango but he obviously knew how to dance," Schiora Vasile

said through an interpreter. "He was very relaxed and had a lot of energy. I was surprised, as he has the image of being a serious person. But he was a different person when we were dancing; he seems to forget protocol."

Suitably emboldened, the Prince then took to the floor with the President's exceedingly glamorous 28-year-old daughter Zulemita. Their terpsichorean efforts could not properly be described as a tango, but only because Zulemita's white evening dress, although daringly low cut at the top, was far too tight to permit the necessary leg abandon. It did not, however, prevent the Prince from kissing her.

The present Prince of Wales is not the first to let his hair down in Argentina, although he behaves with infinitely more propriety than the future Edward VIII, the last heir to the throne to visit the country.

Initially making a good impression, the former Prince's 1931 tour of Latin America began to sag as it progressed. The Chilean ambassador noted his extra-curricular activities: "Baccarat, roulette, double whisky sodas and ladies with pasties were his favourites."

By the time he reached Argentina the pace was beginning to tell. The biographer Philip Ziegler wrote: "He turned up at important functions two hours late, in the wrong dress and noticeably the worst for wear."

His successor may be a tyro at the tango, but he has a tendency to turn up on time, in the right clothes, and sober.

Falklands row, page 3

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University boxers do battle over the scales

By JOHN GOODBODY
SPORTS NEWS CORRESPONDENT

THE Varsity boxing match began in chaos last night when a simmering dispute between Oxford and Cambridge had nearly caused its cancellation.

The controversy, the biggest of either of the universities since the 1987-88 boat race mutiny, had been mounting for months since the two sides failed to agree on the timing of the weigh-in. Cambridge wanted a later start of 6pm instead of the traditional midday, and insisted on their right to choose the weigh-in time, but Oxford refused. Oxford

should take place earlier to give the boxers a chance to rehydrate and eat.

Last year the two sides took the same view. But Oxford, then the home team, had its way when Cambridge were informed that, since the event is run by the Amateur Boxing Association as an open tournament, "there is no requirement for the weigh-in to be in the evening, but can be determined by the promoting club – obviously this year that being Oxford."

This year Cambridge were the hosts and insisted on their right to choose the weigh-in time, but Oxford refused. Ox-

ford have won the past 13 meetings, making the antagonism between the two universities particularly intense.

The arguments continued last night at the Guildhall, Cambridge, where £80 had paid a total of £10,000 to watch the annual match. The ABA insisted that there had to be a weigh-in with their officials present.

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Pro-euro Conservatives win the game of the name



WILLIAM HAGUE suffered a fresh blow yesterday when Conservative officials failed to prevent breakaway pro-European Tories from registering a new political party yesterday.

The new Registrar of Political Parties brushed aside Tory objections that the name of the Pro-Euro Conservative Party was too similar to that of the official Conservative Party.

The decision opens the way for the group to put up a comprehensive list of candidates

Rebels could steal European seats from Hague, writes James Landale

for the European elections in June. If the party campaigns hard, it could win a handful of seats.

But more importantly, if it could steal enough Tory votes to reduce substantially the number of seats that William Hague is entitled to, it could win a handful of seats.

The Pro-Euro Conservative Party was set up by two MEPs who defected from the Tories in January in protest at

Mr Hague's opposition to the European single currency.

John Stevens, MEP for Thames Valley, said: "Conservatives who had thought their only options were to vote for Labour, the Liberal Democrats or stay at home, can now vote Conservative and in favour of the euro. We will do all we can to build up support for a nationwide campaign which pro-euro Conservatives can support."

Brendan Donnelly, who is Member of the European Parliament for Sussex South and Crawley, said: "Until now, the policies of William Hague have implied that Conservatives can only be anti-euro."

"Our successful registration proves that it is possible to be both a Conservative and in favour of the euro."

Several breakaway Labour parties have been registered under the rules created by the

Registration of Political Parties Act.

The legislation was introduced to prevent confusion among electors after some candidates used party names almost identical to those of the mainstream parties.

Hugh Kerr, an MEP expelled from Labour last year after being banned for being too critical of election procedures, is standing for the Scottish Socialist Party.

Ken Coates, another MEP expelled from the Labour Party at the same time, is heading the new Alternative Labour List in the East Midlands region.

Forty-nine parties in all, including the ten with House of Commons seats, have so far been formally registered to fight for seats in this summer's elections to the Scottish parliament, the Welsh assembly and to the European Parliament.

Letters, page 23

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cardinal's offer on abortion

Roman Catholic women in Scotland who have had an abortion have been invited back to the Church for a "fast track" to salvation. Cardinal Thomas Wimberly, leader of Scotland's Catholics, used a speech to mark the second anniversary of his controversial "cash for babies" programme to remind women that they could "make peace with God and their unborn child".

His offer on Tuesday night was extended to women who have had abortions, doctors and nurses who have performed the procedure; and relatives who have counselled for abortions.

He has told priests in the Archdiocese of Glasgow that they no longer needed to refer to the bishop to give abortion to a woman who had had an abortion and sought forgiveness through confession.

Three men held

Three men were being questioned about the murder of Michael Mensah, a 30-year-old black musician found in a North London house suffering from burns. The men were arrested in the Edmonton area and were being held by the Yard's new racial and violent crime task force.

Doping charges

Five men including a professional gambler were charged after a Scotland Yard investigation with conspiracy to defraud bookmakers by doping horses to reduce their performance during March 1997. They will appear at Bow Street Magistrates' Court in April. Racing, page 42

Party planner

Allied Domecq, the brewer, has announced plans for the millennium celebrations which include having all its 2,000 managed outlets and 1,500 leased pubs open, selling drinks at normal prices and not charging for admissions. Staff will be paid triple time and a share of takings.

McDonald move

The Channel 4 presenter Sheila McDonald is to be moved out of intensive care at University College Hospital London and into a rehabilitation centre to aid her recovery after being hit by a police van answering a 999 call. The 44-year-old suffered serious head injuries in the accident.

Guinness death

A member of the Guinness family died when she was thrown from her Roman caravans. An inquest was told Rose Nugent, 31, niece of the late Lady Henrietta Guinness, struggled to regain control when the horse bolted near the family estate in Berkshire. Verdict: accidental death.

Lunch

Grenfell: food for thought

Geldof makes millions from Planet 24 sale

BY RAYMOND SNOODY
MEDIA EDITOR

BOB GELDOF and Lord Alli, the Labour peer, are expected to receive up to £6 million each from the sale of their Planet 24 television company to Carlton Communications. Charlie Parsons, the producer, who also owns a third of the company, will also benefit.

The deal means that one of the United Kingdom's most conservative media moguls, Michael Green, chairman of Carlton Communications, now owns one of the country's zaniest television companies. Planet 24 pioneered programmes such as *The Word* and *The Big Breakfast*.

Carlton, one of Britain's largest commercial television companies is believed to be making an immediate £10 million payment for Planet 24. The three equal shareholders can then receive up to another £8 million depending on how the independent production company performs in future.

Mr Geldof, who organised the Band Aid concerts to raise money to relieve famine in Ethiopia, said yesterday that now Planet 24 had been sold he intended to pursue a ca-



Geldof: a creator of innovative television

reer as an astrophysicist". In fact Mr Geldof, who last month completed a three-month stint presenting an evening radio programme on the London station Xfm, part of the Capital Group, is more likely to chase radio investments around Europe.

Lord Alli, who is particularly close to new Labour, will join the board of Carlton Television in April and will take on the new role of managing director of Carlton Productions. The enlarged division will include not just the existing Carlton Productions but also Planet 24 and Action

Time, a Carlton production company specialising in game shows.

Together the Carlton production houses will be spending more than £200 million a year making programmes for all of Britain's broadcasters, including digital television.

In buying Planet 24, which also makes *Watercolour Challenge* for Channel 4 and *Gaytime TV* for the BBC, Mr Green, 50, is tapping into the youth market. Planet 24 has nurtured popular talent such as Chris Evans, Lily Savage, Mark Lamarr and Gaby Roslin.

Mr Green, who was closely associated with the Conservatives under Baroness Thatcher, is through Lord Alli buying himself access to the thinking of new Labour.

Lord Alli said yesterday that, with the backing of "the largest player in ITV and the UK's leading commercial international sales business outside the BBC, the opportunities are boundless".

Mr Geldof claimed yesterday that Planet 24 had managed to shift the way television looked so that screens were now awash with Planett 24 "wannabe" programming.



The King of Swaziland greeted by a guard of honour at the palace yesterday. There was less ceremony at the House

King of Swaziland amazed as two tribes go to war

Asked his view on Western civilisation, Mahatma Gandhi once replied: "I think it would be a good idea." The thought may have occurred to King Mswati III of Swaziland, as he watched Prime Minister's Questions yesterday - amazed at the savagery.

His Majesty, on a visit to Britain, graced the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery in magnificient scarlet tunics and brocade. Swaziland is a small, safe, stable country in Southern Africa, its constitution a blend of tribal tradition with democracy. Ceremony there is colourful but decorous: nobody is insulted; nobody gets hurt.

How different from our own tribe. The Commons hit a new height of pantomime or plumb new depths of barbarism, depending upon whether you view the Chamber as a branch of theatre or of government.

At a luncheon in his honour the previous day at the Mansion House - and to the horror of the Lord Mayor - the

King had risen to what sounded like an impromptu tirade in the Swazi language from an unknown guest in a brown leather coat. But this was Swazi etiquette: royal persons should rise to a bubble of praise. His Majesty will therefore have been less surprised than many visitors to witness something similar when our Prime Minister rose. Everyone started screaming.

The Swazi King will also have recognised a custom now firmly observed in King Tony's court. Every Labour backbencher asking Blair a question prefaces it with an extravagant verbal grovel. This is getting sillier than the silliest days of the premiership of the Great She-Elephant (the *Indlovukazi* title which the Swazis accord to their Queen Mother and which Sir Julian Critchley once borrowed for his own Party Leader).

"Can I say how welcome is the boost for business..." began Jonathan Shaw (Lab, Chatham & Aylesford). Could Phil Woolas (Lab) welcome the £15 million for schools in his constituency of Oldham E & Saddleworth? He could.

Was Blair "aware how warmly welcome in Scotland" was this week's Budget? He was after Jim Murphy (Lab, Eastwood) had told him. Labour's Gareth Thomas ("while welcoming... etc") had the cheek to mention a massive oil spill off his constituency of Clwyd W. Off message. Gareth: King Tony does not wish to receive bad news.

But these primitive traditions were routine by comparison with the Wat Dance. William Hague rose to wild ululation behind him. In a ritual chant he then asked the same question five times would the Prime Minister say "what is

the total tax rise, in pounds..." this Government have overseen? To an answering cacophony from the Labour side, King Tony insisted, five times, that there was no rise, but a fall.

King Mswati looked astonished. Each side plainly thought its chief was winning. But the clash of testimony was never resolved. Or rather, it was resolved by a raft of unprecedented violence from King Tony about how good his tribe were and how bad were the Tories.

Maybe the House should create a new ceremony? When statistical deadlock is reached, Madam Speaker should strike a traditional African skin drum (gift of Swaziland) and a figure of majestic authority in such matters, such as Peter Riddell, should be carried in by bearers to adjudicate. Happily I understand that Mr Riddell briefly lowers his bifocals to dispose of this clash, *en passant*, in his column in *The Times* this morning. I hope King Mswati sees it.

Blair crony moves into the top slot at Carlton

BY CAROL MIDGLEY
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT



Alli: known for smart dress and chauffeur

His rise through the Establishment has been meteoric, particularly after the careers teacher at his South London comprehensive advised him to become a bus conductor.

In 1992 he met Mr Parsons,

the highly creative force behind programmes such as *Nerf War*, who had just teamed up with Bob Geldof at Planet 24 with the aim of pioneering the "laddish" programmes of the 1990s such as *The Big Breakfast* and *The Word*.

He and Mr Parsons became an item and are now one of the most fashionable couples in the country, the very symbols of new Britain.

Last year a party was staged at their Kent mansion for Mr Parsons's 40th birthday. There were peacocks on the lawn and dodgem cars and waltzers in the grounds with guests ranging from Peter Mandelson, one of Lord Alli's closest friends, to *EastEnders* actor Ross Kemp and Vanessa Feltz.

partner Charlie Parsons, was made the youngest life peer after the general election - a reward for his unstinting support and financial donations to New Labour.

He is a colourful, diminutive figure, famous for his immaculate three-piece suits and his Jaguar car driven by a traditional English chauffeur.

By MARK INGLEFIELD
POLITICAL REPORTER

FRANCIS MAUDE, the Shadow Chancellor, was found to have broken the House of Commons anti-sleaze rules yesterday after an inquiry by the Parliamentary Committee on Standards and Privileges.

He had been reported to the committee for failing to declare an interest in a

debate he helped to initiate to oppose government plans to replace PEPs with individual savings accounts. Mr Maude is a director of the fund managers Garmore Shared Equity Trust.

He was also reported for adding his name to a Tory amendment to a finance Bill affecting tax on retail shops. It was claimed that he should have declared this as he receives £25,000 as a director of the supermarket chain Asda.

But although the standards committee found that Mr Maude had fallen "l foul of the rules", it claimed that this had been "unintentional" as his name had been added to the debate by another Tory MP.

Elizabeth Filkin, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, ruled that Mr Maude should have declared his interest in Garmore because of its links with a firm which was involved

in selling personal finance products.

But, she said, both breaches had arisen from the practice by the major parties of automatically adding the names of their frontbench spokesmen, in Government and Opposition, to relevant motions and amendments.

Mrs Filkin suggested that, in future, party whips should check their speakers' men's personal financial interests before adding their names.

Condon unease at racism curbs

BY STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

SIR PAUL CONDON yesterday dismissed two of the principal legal reforms proposed by the Stephen Lawrence inquiry and cast doubt on the third. The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police told MPs that the proposals for a law against racist language and behaviour in private would be unworkable.

Any legislation would go against the spirit of the European Convention on Hu-

man Rights, and Britain was moving away from this type of law, he said while giving evidence to the Commons Select Committee on Home Affairs. He expected that the idea would be explored and then rejected as impractical.

Sir Paul said he was also "troubled" by the suggestion from Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, the inquiry chairman, that courts should abandon the legal principle that defendants cannot be re-tried on a charge for which they have been acquitted, even if there is new evidence. "It

seems to be going in the opposite direction from the sorts of protection we have sought around suspects."

Asked about proposals to bring the police within the scope of the Commission for Racial Equality, he said he would not resist the change, which is supported by the Government, but would point out some difficulties.

Sir Paul condemned the inquiry's accidental release of details of police informants, saying that it had given police an enormous amount of work.

BY STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A SENIOR black civil servant who advises ministers on race relations has been hauled by police under stop and search powers more than 40 times. MPs were told yesterday.

The case of Trevor Hall was raised yesterday with Sir Paul Condon, commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, as he gave evidence to the Commons select committee on home affairs on issues including police use of stop and search powers against black people.

In 17 years Mr Hall, now in his 50s, has been stopped on 44 occasions, 39 of which were by officers in London. His experience was once highlighted by a High Court judge during a lecture on race relations as

an example of the racism and ignorance within the City of London during terrorist alerts and all drivers were affected.

Asked about Mr Hall, who acted as a go-between for the Lawrence family and the commissioner earlier this year, Sir Paul said he had met him several times but he made no comment about the number of times the civil servant has been stopped.

Yesterday the Home Office said that some of the stops

were part of police operations round the City of London during terrorist alerts and all drivers were affected.

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This Saturday in
the times

JOHN
DIAMOND
Diary of Courage

'In January
I wrote that
my cancer
was now
incurable.
As a result
my malibag
quintupled
overnight.'



The Saturday Times
Only 60p

Why British shoppers get a raw deal

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

STEPHEN BYERS, the Trade and Industry Secretary, is right that shoppers in this country are paying more for consumer goods than people abroad.

We are being charged more for cars, groceries, clothes and CDs. At first the complaints were based on anecdotal evidence, but there have now been several investigations of

the huge price gaps. Now the Government is to do its own. Retailers will no longer be able to get away with overcharging.

A survey by Beuc, the Brussels-based consumer group, recently found that the this country was the most expensive in Europe for a range of goods it surveyed which included audio, video, and elec-

trical appliances, clothes and sports shoes. It found that car radios in London were 36 per cent more expensive than in Rome, and that stereos were 30 per cent dearer in London than in Aachen, Germany.

A study of car prices by the European Commission found that some cars can cost half as much again in this country than in continental countries, despite Britain being a fairly big manufacturer of cars.

A report soon to be published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is expected to show that the gaps have widened between prices since its last report in 1995 and that goods and services are the most expensive in the UK than most comparable countries. The last report found that UK shoppers paid 29 per cent more for cars and motorbikes and 31 per cent more for sports gear.

The arrival of the euro will heighten the consumer's feeling of injustice, as it will bring greater price transparency.

The action by the Government to get tough on retailers comes as the Office of Fair

Trading is investigating car sales, supermarkets, private medicine and over-the-counter drugs. The car sales industry could even be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission after the Trade and Industry Select Committee berated the dealerships for anti-competitive actions.

Consumers may at last have friends in the right places.

But as retailers and others who stand accused of high charging will tell the Government, it is not a simple case of profiteering.

Rather, the costs they bear

are higher than many of their international counterparts.

This is as much a problem for British business as it is for the high-street shopper.

When McKinsey, the management consultants, produced a report for the Treasury on why Britain languished low in the ranks of international competitiveness and productivity, it highlighted the high cost of land and planning restrictions. Land is more expensive in this country because there is less of it than in the United States, France or Germany.

Furthermore, the Govern-

ment is not keen on more out-of-town shopping centres being built. This limits supermarkets' abilities to make economy-of-scale savings.

There are, of course, other blocks to cheap prices such as when one high-street retailer controls much of the market in one area. Or as in the case of car selling where ordinary customers are forced to subsidise cheap deals for the company fleet car buyers.

Energy costs are another obstacle. Big business users have consistently complained about high power costs in the electric-

ity market. The market is now about to be abolished.

There are many problems and anomalies which force UK consumers to pay more than they need to for goods.

The Government has much work to do but shaming the culprits, followed by tougher powers which are being given to the OFT to be a good start.

The OFT has pursued high price setters in the past but its lack of teeth has meant many retailers have been able to merely say sorry and then do it all again. They will soon not be able to escape so easily.

Shopping in Boulogne may not be such a tempting prospect for British shoppers once high prices here are tackled

SHOPPING AROUND THE WORLD

	BRITAIN	FRANCE	GERMANY	UNITED STATES
Fillet steak (per pound)	£7.00	£4.50	£4.80	£6.00
Adidas top	£35.00	£40.00	£30.00	£30.00
Sony Trinitron TV 21ins	£350.00	£278.00	£321.00	£212.00
BMW 528i	£32,000	£29,947	£26,857	£27,607

High street shopping centres are being built. This limits supermarkets' abilities to make economy-of-scale savings.

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Prescott acts to cut water costs

By VALERIE ELLIOTT
WHITEHALL EDITOR

THE drive to cut water bills for households and industry is being led by John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister.

He has told Ian Byatt, head of Ofwat, the water regulator, that he believes the water companies have enough cash to cut bills by 10 per cent.

Mr Byatt is negotiating with the 26 water companies over their pricing regimes for the five years from April next year.

Mr Prescott is concerned that there is too much variation in prices for water for households in various parts of the country. He is particularly concerned that pensioners and poor families might be disadvantaged by a company's charging policy. There have been particular complaints in the southwest of England, which has a high level of pensioner households. Their average bill for water and sewerage is £125, compared with an average bill of £99 for customers of Thames Water Utilities.

Officials have only just started work on the project and Mr Prescott is not expected to see a discussion paper for at least six months.



Water firms can afford bill cuts, says Prescott

Prescott is determined to find a way of breaking the monopoly of water companies supplying industry.

The main difficulty is that there is no equivalent national grid for water like that for electricity and gas, but one option being discussed is the possibility of companies in sites bordering two water company areas to be able to choose their supplier.

The same option is not being considered for households.

Officials have only just started work on the project and Mr Prescott is not expected to see a discussion paper for at least six months.

Congestion may force flight curbs

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY
TRANSPORT
CORRESPONDENT

RESTRICTIONS on the number of flights to Britain's busiest airports could be introduced to relieve airport congestion. John Prescott is to lead an inquiry into airport competition that will examine whether landing slots are being shared fairly among airlines and if some traffic could be diverted from London.

The Deputy Prime Minister is concerned that too much reliance on airports around the capital is limiting the expansion of regional airports.

BAA, Britain's biggest airport operator, dismisses suggestions that its ownership of three London airports — Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted — encourages anti-competitive behaviour. It points to previous investigations by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission which have found no evidence that it has abused its dominant position.

However, Mr Prescott will be looking closely at ways in which big airlines such as British Airways have switched landing slots between the three airports.

The allocation of so-called



Airports: crowding is leading to hard choices

"grandfather slots" to airlines, which can keep them indefinitely as long as they are in use, has prompted claims of anti-competitive behaviour by smaller carriers. British Airways retains 40 per cent of Heathrow slots but can switch them to a new route if a rival moves into a fresh market.

Severe overcrowding at Heathrow has forced British Airways to make much greater use of Stansted and Gatwick. Some rival airlines fear the carrier could be securing short-haul slots at the two less congested airports in readiness for further expansion into the American market.



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BOOKS
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JP11/01/99

Hypnosis is last gasp for 700 smokers

Richard Duce, a 20-a-day man, joins a theatre full of people hoping to kick the habit for No Smoking Day

IF THE people who packed a theatre for a display of mass hypnosis are to be believed, 700 men and women gave up smoking yesterday.

Cigarette butts littered the pavement outside the New London theatre as hundreds of smokers took what they hoped would be their last nicotine fix while queuing to see the hypnotist Paul McKenna. They had tried everything else: nicotine patches, nicotine inhalers and plain willpower had all failed for the addicts who travelled from across London and the Home Counties after McKenna offered free mass hypnosis to coincide with National No Smoking Day.

All voiced similar reasons for another attempt to ditch the habit indulged in by 12 million people, of whom eight million would rather quit. Jenny O'Connell, a nurse with a 20-a-day habit, said: "It's for health and money reasons. They went up again in the

Budget. I am just sick of being a smoker, coughing in the morning and smelling of stale smoke."

Caroline Palmer, 28, admitted she rather fancied a man who had recently quit smoking 60 a day and was now a zealous convert. If she, too, could give up, perhaps she was to with a chance. "I'm really hoping it's going to work."

She was there with two friends from North London, Catherine Edwards, 29, a fitness instructor, and Catherine White, 26, who works in advertising. "If one us stops then I think we will all stop, but the real test will be when we are all together having a drink," Miss Palmer said.

All the people interviewed both before and after the show agreed to be contacted by *The Times* in the months to come to see if McKenna had aided their resolve to quit.

Inside the auditorium, the hypnotist first asked people to get rid of their cigarettes if they were determined to quit. He was bombarded with a hundred or more half-filled packets.

Eventually he built up to the main event as he attempted to put the entire audience into a trance. They closed their eyes and, counting backwards from 300, listened to the soporific rhythm of his voice as he urged them to think how much better life would be if they gave up. Of course, if you still needed help, his stop-smoking cassette was on sale in the coffee shop.

After the event, organised



Kicking the habit: Maria Valkenburghs, left, Peta Darling, centre, and Gill Hicks were determined to give up and optimistic that McKenna might be the man to help them to do it

by Capital Radio, as the audience drifted home or back to work, no-one was going to be seen to light up. Those who stayed behind swapped experiences and said they now thought they could quit.

Maria Valkenburghs, 37, a product manager from Richmond, southwest London, said: "I feel good. I don't feel like a cigarette at the moment. I heard about this on the radio yesterday and took a day off to be here. I thought I had to give it a chance."

Gill Hicks, an image con-

sultant from Ealing, West London, who has smoked 20 a day for the past 23 years, said: "I feel very determined. I threw away my packet of cigarettes yesterday and have a patch on."

Peta Darling, a theatre worker, also from Ealing, said: "I feel that just some of the techniques he mentioned will help me to make a conscious effort to stop."

After a typical 30-plus minute journey through London traffic to *The Times* offices in Wapping, potential converts had fallen to 699 at least.

□ The first helpline aimed at helping pregnant women to give up smoking is to be set up later this year. Smoking while pregnant is known to be extremely harmful: the babies of women who smoke are smaller and less likely to survive than those of non-smokers.

Tessa Jowell, the Public Health Minister, announced the move during a visit to Quit, the national charity which helps people to stop smoking.

She said: "Smoking kills 120,000 people in Britain every

year. And every year, while it is killing 120,000 people, it is harming thousands of babies in the womb. That can't be right."

□

"Seven out of ten adult smokers want to quit. That includes thousands of pregnant women who smoke from 23 per cent to 15 per cent by 2010, which will mean persuading 55,000 people to give up. It will be included as part of wider arrangements for a national smoking helpline. Funding will come from a £50 million public education package."

Ms Jowell said the aim was to provide an "intensive programme of counselling support, tailored directly to the needs of each individual". She added: "We want a service which reaches women early in their pregnancy, is accessible, flexible, and provides continued support throughout and beyond the pregnancy."

"Experience from home and overseas suggests that providing pregnant women with this type of support can double their chances of quitting successfully."

McKenna had 700 people counting backwards

Suicide in custody 'a voluntary decision'

BY ELIZABETH JUDGE

THE girlfriend of a man who committed suicide in police custody was not entitled to £8,690 damages, because it was his choice to kill himself, law lords were told yesterday.

Sheila Reeves was ineligible for compensation, from the Metropolitan Police, David Pannick, QC, said, because Marin Lynch, who was facing deception charges, had committed "a voluntary act by a person of sound mind".

Mr Lynch hanged himself at Kentish Town police station in March 1990. He had already made one attempt to kill himself that day. Sir Paul Condon, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, was challenging a ruling by the Court of Appeal in November 1997 that the force should pay damages to Ms Reeves. The court ruled that the force had failed in its responsibility to take care of Mr Lynch by leaving open a flap in his cell door, on which he tied a shirt as a ligature.

Nicholas Blake, QC, for Ms Reeves, pointed out, that in 1968 the Home Office had instructed all police authorities that cell flaps should not be left open because of the suicide risk. The hearing continues.

Accusers are liars, says war crime man

BY A CORRESPONDENT

A RETIRED British Rail ticket collector denied murdering Jews during the Nazi occupation of his home town in Belarus, an Old Bailey jury was told yesterday.

Anthony Sawonius told police investigating war crimes: "No one can put a finger on me that I killed a Jew. The people who gave you that evidence are liars. The people over there will tell you anything for a couple of bob."

He said that people still living in Domachevo knew nothing about what went on during the Second World War. "They are liars. They want to destroy my life," he said.

Mr Sawonius, 77, of southeast London, denies four charges of murdering Jews while a member of a police unit in Domachevo in 1942. He is accused of collaborating with the Nazis and leading police squads to hunt down Jews trying to escape massacre.

He said when interviewed in 1994 that to be accused of killing Jews was idiotic. "I used to work for them. They gave me food. I could not go against those people."

The case resumes on Monday. (PA News)

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Kicking the habit: Maria Valkenburghs, left, Peta Darling, centre, and Gill Hicks were determined to give up and optimistic that McKenna might be the man to help them to do it

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'As bad as it gets' in the NHS

Ian Murray reports on a nurse's despairing tale about the daily dilemmas caused by understaffing

THE time was 11pm, two hours after the nurse coming off the ward was supposed to have finished her shift. She sat down and wrote a letter to Christine Hancock, general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, spelling out the dilemma of working for the NHS.

The staff nurse had been forced to choose which of her needy patients to give attention to. Two had just had operations: one had unstable blood pressure that needed constant monitoring in case of a stroke; the other had an unstable blood sugar level that threatened to plunge him into shock.

Another patient was in severe pain from a catheter. A confused patient kept trying to jump out of bed. "The other 13 patients were shouting for bottles, bedpans, pain relief – or just to talk."

Miss Hancock read the letter from the "tired and despairing" nurse to delegates at the college's annual conference in Harrogate yesterday. It illustrated how shortages of well-qualified staff were so acute that nurses had to ignore some seriously ill patients so that they could look after others, she said.

Having to choose between acutely ill patients equally deserving of a nurse's skills was as bad as the job could get, she said. "We know that the feel-

ing that you can't do your job properly forces many nurses to quit the NHS."

Nurses were under such pressure because hospitals were trying to save money by replacing senior grades with juniors and auxiliaries. "We need – patients need – to be clear what a safe nursing skill mix really means. The Government needs to listen."

"Nurses need the power to define what safe staffing levels are. Weakening the skill mix is not about saving money. It is wasting money and it has got to stop."

Nurses had to make management and patients understand how central they were to healthcare. "We need to become much better at communicating nurses' contribution to health improvement. We don't have any credibility unless we can show that extra registered nurses improve the quality of patient care."

The problem for nurses was that their skills were often invisible. "Few people understand what we do. They think we are kind, they think we are ministering angels, but often people haven't got a clue what nurses are actually doing. The trouble is, because few people understand what we do, nursing is undervalued. We get out of the loop too easily."

New performance indica-



Christine Hancock addressing Royal College of Nursing delegates yesterday on the dilemma created on the wards by a shortage of qualified staff

tors were needed to highlight the importance of nursing care and to measure the "human touch". "We've got league tables for death rates, why not have them for the incidents of pressure sores, for pain management, nutritional standards, or the number of patients who say that their discharge home was properly

planned? When we know how important nurses are to quality patient care, when we know more registered nurses mean death rates are cut by 5 per cent, why not publish information on staffing levels, the skill mix of qualified and unqualified nursing staff and staff turnover?" Care statistics alone were

not enough, Miss Hancock said. "Many of our hospitals are depressing, dirty, demoralising buildings long past their sell-by date. Even if the buildings are sound, inside you will often find the paint is flaking, windows are grimy and the sheets haven't been changed. "The environment of care is not just about bricks and mor-

tar. It is about noise, equipment and patients' basic rights to privacy and dignity. It means an end to the humiliation of mixed-sex wards."

The congress, which earlier this week reluctantly approved this year's 4.7 per cent pay award for most nurses, cheered her when she said that higher wages were a long way to halt declining standards. Pay alone was not the whole answer, however.

"There is something about the culture of nursing that is almost shy about describing our impact on patient care. We can't afford to be shy any more. The real healthcare challenge of the next century is realising the value of nursing."

Walker dies

An inexperienced walker has been found dead by a mountain rescue team in a part of Derbyshire's Peak District blanketed in waist-high snow. Police had been searching for Duc Thu Do, 38, from Leicester, since Sunday.

Treasure returns

Scotland Yard will today hand back important antiquities to Egypt that had been smuggled out of the country by Jonathan Tokeley-Parry, a restorer who disguised them as trinkets. They include five tomb reliefs and 27 papyri.

Family found

Amanda Sparrow, 20, and her children Stephanie, 3, Abigail, 2 and Sophie, 8 months, who vanished from Southampton on Friday, have been found in Blackham. Sophie had been admitted to hospital with dehydration and hypothermia.

Self-drive bus

A bus passenger who had slept past his stop drove off from a Birmingham depot in a double-decker whose engine had been left running, picking up a woman passenger on the way. He faces two criminal and two driving charges.

Moth invasion

Hundreds of Indian meal moths that hatched in a packet of bird seed forced a couple to leave their home and have it fumigated. Peter and Christine Lightfoot, of Reading, spent two weeks in an hotel before returning home.

Designer vouchers give young cyclists a head start



Nurse Ross Meeks backs the campaign for safer cycling

DESIGNER cycling helmets costing up to £60 will be available "on prescription" thanks to a campaign by the Royal College of Nursing to make them compulsory.

Under the scheme, to be launched in two weeks, cyclists will be able to collect a voucher from health centres and GPs' surgeries that will entitle them to a helmet with the prestigious Bell label at a cost of only £8.50.

The RCN campaign, backed at its annual congress in Harrogate yesterday, was inspired by a nurse in whose arms a 13-year-old boy died from head injuries he received in a cycling accident.

"He had gorgeous blond hair," said Angela Lee, a paediatric trauma nurse at the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading. "There was no mark on him, but his brain was mush. We

nursed him for eight months, but in the end he died in my arms."

Three weeks later, a 14-year-old boy was taken to the hospital with a serious brain injury after a cycling accident. "I decided enough was enough and something had to be done," Miss Lee said. She founded the Bicycle Helmet Initiative Trust and set about gathering the facts to prove that helmets would save lives and prevent permanent brain damage.

The case of the 14-year-old boy highlighted the difficulties in getting children to wear helmets. "He was a street-wise, tough kid who thought if would

never happen to him, so he didn't wear a helmet," Miss Lee said. "Like so many children he thought only nerds wore helmets."

She found that children were happier to wear a helmet if it had a designer label. But these can cost from £40 to £60, compared with the unlabelled varieties, which sell for about £12.50.

Every year, 200 cyclists are killed and 4,500 seriously injured on Britain's roads. About 70 per cent of those killed and 50 per cent of those injured have head injuries. The campaign Miss Lee started in Reading in 1993 has led to a trebling of the number of helmets worn

and a 45 per cent reduction in head injuries in the town.

The RCN has run into opposition to its campaign for compulsory helmets from cyclist organisations who claim that they would interfere with freedom of choice. They say that, in Australia, fewer people rode bicycles after all cyclists were forced by law to wear helmets.

Miss Lee said this fall proved only temporary and, since then, New Zealand, Iceland, 16 American states and two Canadian provinces had made helmets compulsory. The RCN will now lobby the Government to get Britain to follow their example.

The compulsory helmets scheme, a joint initiative between the RCN and the helmet manufacturer Bell, does not involve any public money.

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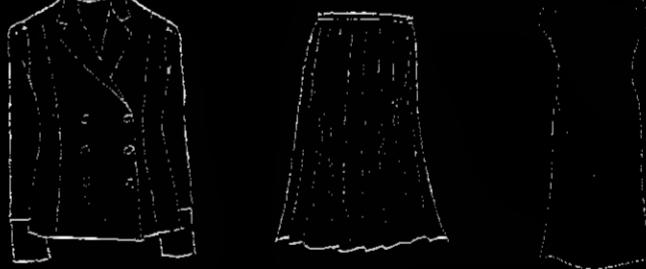
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Care home 'negligent' over death

A care home that charges up to £1,800 a week was accused yesterday of gross negligence after a patient was found dead in a ditch. Alan Craze, the East Sussex coroner, recorded a verdict of neglect after hearing how John Hanaphy, 41, a former postman, was able to wander off to his death. His body was found 12 days later in woodland near The Vine care home, run by Libra Health, in Crowborough, East Sussex. Staff had let standards of vigilance drop, the coroner said. "In my view there was gross negligence."

An inexperienced walker has been found dead by a mountain rescue team in a part of Derbyshire's Peak District blanketed in waist-high snow. Police had been searching for Duc Thu Do, 38, from Leicester, since Sunday.

Scotland Yard will today hand back important antiquities to Egypt that had been smuggled out of the country by Jonathan Tokeley-Parry, a restorer who disguised them as trinkets. They include five tomb reliefs and 27 papyri.

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THE TIMES THURSDAY MARCH 11 1999

Urgent plan to stop London flooding

Disaster caused by rapidly rising water table could be averted with boreholes, reports Nick Nuttall

A NETWORK of 50 boreholes, able to siphon off billions of litres of water a year, to be drilled to save London's buildings and Underground network from flooding.

The scheme, drawn up by companies and organisations including Thames Water, the Environment Agency and the Association of British Insurers, follows alarm over rising groundwater levels under London since the loss of water-hungry industries such as brewing and engineering.

Experts fear that, unless urgent action is taken, buildings with deep foundations and basements, some underground car parks, telecommunications and electricity cables and parts of the Tube may become unstable in as little as five years.

The £10 million project could become a blueprint for other cities — including Birmingham, Manchester, Paris and Milan — where a rising water table is a threat.

John Sexton, of Thames Water, said the water table was rising by as much as three me-

tres a year. "It is time to act, not to delay, in five years we will have a real threat on our hands," he said.

A spokesman for London Underground said yesterday that the water table was 100 metres below Trafalgar Square in about 1905. In the 1950s it was recovering and stood at about 80m below Sir Edwin Landseer's lions. By 1995 it had climbed to about 50m below street level and it was now about 40m.

It has put the water table within reach of some of the deepest parts of the Underground network and deep foundations in the City of London, some of which are only 20m below the ground.

While the rate of recovery has slowed, the water table is still on course to return to its natural level of between 20 and zero metres below street level in areas of Westminster and the City by 2010.

The London Underground has spent £100 million in the past few years on securing parts of the network, including sections of the Bakerloo



The Millennium Dome already has a borehole

and Northern lines that were in danger of flooding and short-circuiting. But there remain worries that the rising water table will put pressure on the clay soil and trigger subsidence of sensitive equipment such as escalators.

Experts fear that some buildings with deep foundations may "pop out of the ground" unless action is taken to lower the water table.

Mr Sexton said the scheme, to be unveiled next week at a conference organised by the City of London for business leaders and the government of-

fice for London, will extract up to 70 million litres of water a day.

A third of the water, siphoned from the 50 boreholes to be developed during the next six years, will be used for drinking. However, some will be so salty that it is too costly to treat. Mr Sexton said they planned to discuss with landowners and councils ideas for reusing this water, including ornamental ponds and fountains, car washes and horticulture. Surplus water will be dispatched down the sewer system into rivers.

Thames Water has put up £8 million of the £10 million, but believes that other organisations and companies that stand to benefit should chip in.

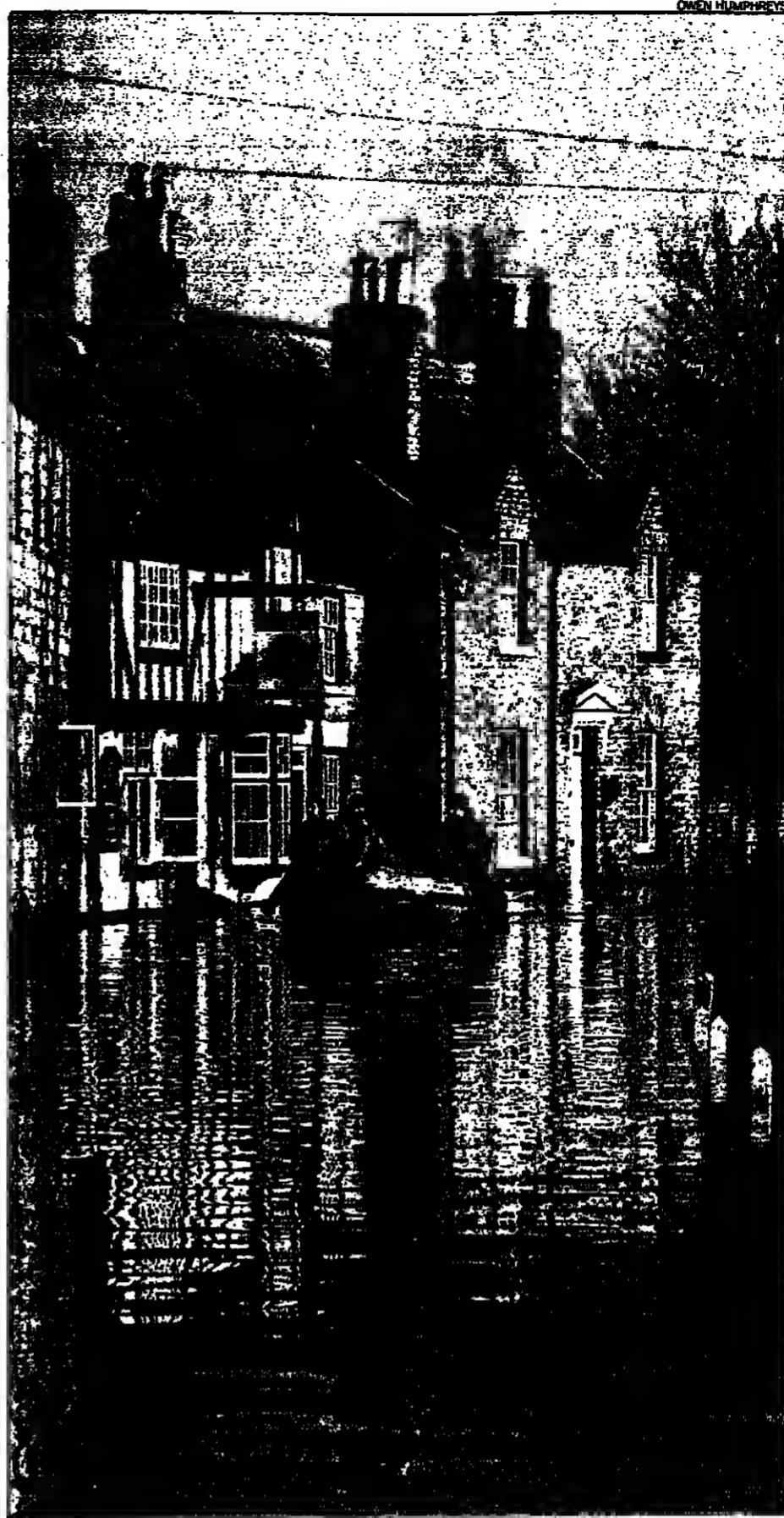
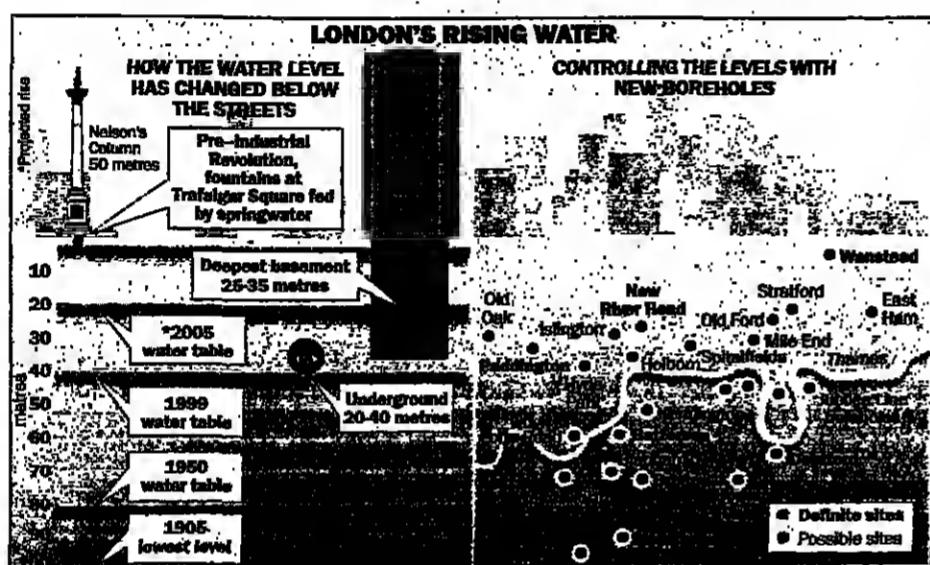
The threat of the rising water level is already adding to construction costs. The new British Library has a 35m deep basement with reinforced walls to counter flooding.

Thames Water, which has submitted the proposal to Nick Raynsford, the Minister for London, estimates that the annual running costs will be about £2 million.

The scheme has already started. Boreholes at Streatham and Merton in southwest London have been opened and work is under way at Islington, Battersea and Brixton. Other sites have been identified and the company is studying other, undisclosed sites, where it is likely to apply for planning permission to complete the full network.

Bill Alexander, chief executive of Thames Water and chairman of the project's steering group, Gardit, said yesterday: "We have worked hard to develop this solution and are keen to see it implemented as soon as possible. There is no time to waste."

A spokesman for Birmingham City Council, where pumping has begun in some low-lying basements and cellars, said yesterday that they were carrying out studies with Severn Trent Water to see how easy it might be to siphon off the rising water table.



Parts of Malton were still flooded yesterday. The repair bill is likely to run into millions

HOME NEWS 9

A close call for Marina the water baby

BY PAUL WILKINSON

JANE HARTLEY'S baby will have a personal reason to recall the great floods of 1999. Her name, Marina, marks the day when the fast-rising waters almost cut her parents off from hospital as she was about to be born.

Marina's mother and her partner, Geoff Hutchinson, 44, had left their countryside home near Kirkbymoorside, on the edge of the North York Moors, en route for York District Hospital 25 miles away, early on Monday morning. But they soon realised the 40-minute journey was not going to be the usual simple run.

Mr Hutchinson, a stone-mason, said: "I knew the way round the back roads, so I thought we'd get through." But when they reached the town of Pickering, ten miles away, he realised the way was impassable.

By that time 33-year-old Miss Hartley's contractions were only five minutes apart. "She was lying on the back-seat uttering words of Anglo-Saxon origin," he said.

"Five minutes from Malton, Jane's contractions were only four minutes apart so we decided there was no way we were going to York." He diverted to the community hospital in Malton. "We arrived just after 7am and at 8.15am our baby daughter arrived."

Mother and Marina, who weighed in at 7lb 5oz, are both doing fine back at home in the village of Appleton-le-Moor.

The total number of homes flooded by the waters rose yesterday to more than 200. The cost of repairs to homes and businesses will run into tens of millions of pounds.

Malcolm Tarling, of the Association of British Insurers, said similar flooding which hit the East and South Midlands last April cost insurers £100 million. "The value of the damage in Ryedale could be tens of millions of pounds."



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British boxing fans take flight for big fight

BY ADAM FRESCO AND ELIZABETH JUDGE

THE biggest contingent of British boxing fans to travel abroad will start arriving in New York today to back Lennox Lewis as he battles to become the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world.

At least 8,000 fans, enough to fill 19 jumbo jets, will be making the trek to America hoping to see Lewis, the WBC champion, beat Evander Holyfield, the WBA and IBF title holder. More than 1,000 more fans are expected to turn up without tickets hoping to buy from touts at heavily inflated prices.

Tickets for the event at Madison Square Garden, which holds just under 20,000 people, are selling for up to six times their face value of about £60 to more than £900. The cheaper seats sold out within half an hour of going on sale.

A spokesman for boxing's most famous venue said: "We expect upwards of 8,000 British fans to be in The Garden on the night, making the atmosphere electric."

A spokesman for US Air-tours, which has arranged flights and tickets for 300 people, said there was unprecedented demand for a boxing match abroad involving a Brit-

on. He said: "Most of the air-lines have sold out for days. Many fans have said they are going without tickets, hoping to buy once out there."

They are travelling in the hope of seeing the first Briton to become the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world: since 1897, when Bob Fitzsimmons won the title. Since then 12 Britons have tried. The last was Frank Bruno in 1989; he was beaten by Mike Tyson.

Adam Cornwell, 25, who works for an IT recruitment firm in London, is going to see the fight with four friends, each spending £1,000 on

flights, tickets and accommodation. He said: "It is a lot of money, but it is a once-in-a-lifetime event. It is unlikely that I will get another chance to see a British heavyweight challenge for the title at Madison Square Garden and the whole weekend will be brilliant."

Peter Stockton, 37, a commercial manager of a cable manufacturing company in Liverpool, is travelling with seven friends. He is missing the christening of his sister's baby to go to the fight, his first one abroad.

He is using savings for spending money while he is out there and confesses that he has had to tell his wife about the cost of the fight ticket. He said: "She thinks it cost about £30. If she knew how much it really cost I wouldn't have to go all the way to New York for the big fight."

He had been expecting to stay in a small hotel or a youth hostel, but the travel company he booked with made a mistake and as a result it is paying for all of the group to stay in the Marriott Hotel in Times Square.

Lewis: hoping for lucky thirteenth attempt

Lynne Truss, and Lewis tipped, page 49

Mother fights to keep son alive

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

A MOTHER who refused to give doctors permission to let her son die faces a second battle for his life today. Health officials who are reluctant to fund vital treatment are meeting to reassess the case.

Teresa Dwyer, 48, fought off the suggestion as Gregory was moved from hospital to hospital. Lincolnshire Health Authority wanted to put him in a nursing home. But Mrs Dwyer, who described such a

move as a death sentence, persuaded officials to send him for assessment to the Holly Lodge unit near Sheffield.

Now she is afraid that the health authority will decide at a multidisciplinary panel today to stop paying for the £1,400-a-week treatment and to send him to a nursing home for palliative care only, where she believes that he would deteriorate and die.

Mrs Dwyer, from Louth, who has two other children, Gregory's twin sister Isabel

and Roger, 9, said: "We are living on our nerves, wondering when they will stop funding the treatment."

The case will help to focus the debate by the ethics committee of the British Medical Association, which plans to publish guidelines in July on the issue of withholding care from patients. The Tory MP Sir Teddy Taylor has tabled an early day motion calling on the Government to make illegal what he describes as "involuntary euthanasia".

Shrimps blinded by science

BY OUR SCIENCE EDITOR

that are adapted to it. The shrimps' eyes are adapted to the dim light.

Some of the shrimps collected have eyes that are completely white, instead of the normal pink, and appear to have suffered serious damage to the retina. The team suggests in *Nature* that previous visits to the site by the submersibles *Nautilus* and *Alvin*, which used floodlights, may have caused the damage.

When shrimps of the same species are caught by trawlers well above the level of the vents, they show no such damage. The team cautions that any observations made about the behaviour of shrimps at the vents should take into account the fact that they have probably been blinded.

"There is at present no means of work-

ing at the vents without causing this damage, so every vent population visited will already have been exposed to it," they conclude.

Scientists in the United States have identified a gene that enables mice to eat a high-fat diet without putting on weight, a report in *Nature* says. The mice, which have a defective version of the gene, remain a healthy weight whether they eat a high-fat or a low-fat diet with the same amount of calories.

The team, from Millennium Pharmaceuticals in Cambridge, Massachusetts, expect to find the same gene operates in humans. If so, it might provide the route to a new type of anti-obesity drug that would affect the operation of the gene.

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Harare arrests three in US arms mystery

FROM JAN RAATH
IN HARARE

ZIMBABWEAN authorities are holding three Americans who allegedly tried to smuggle weapons on to a flight from Harare to Zurich after visiting the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The state-controlled *Herald* reported yesterday that a team of investigators had flown to the Congo to investigate the men's activities there. Security officials were alerted when one of them tried to pass through an airport metal detector on Sunday night carrying a handgun. Their luggage containing stripped rifles, telescopic sights and ammunition had already passed through security checks.

In the airport car park police discovered a large four-wheel-drive vehicle, said to belong to the three and containing a small arsenal concealed behind secret panels and inside fridges and washing machines. It included automatic rifles, sniper rifles, silencers, infra-red sights, a light machinegun, pistols, shotguns, ammunition, mobile radio equipment, binoculars and as many as 70 knives.

Four days after their arrest there has been no explanation by authorities. The only identification offered by police is that they are men in their thirties who are directors of an Indianapolis business with the name of the John Dixie Window Cleaning Company.

Police have failed to observe the law that obliges them to produce any suspect in court 48 hours after they are arrested. "They are in unlawful custody now," said a senior lawyer. "There is no way that period can be legally extended."

The American Embassy's only response was to deny that the three were linked in any way to the US Government. Diplomatic sources said that the men had invoked American privacy legislation that prevents their being publicly identified by US officials. The sources said that Zimbabwean authorities were being "very co-operative".

Congo expels diplomat and seizes Britons

Envoy accused of spying after embassy team is arrested, Sam Kiley reports

A BRITISH diplomat was yesterday accused of spying and expelled from the Democratic Republic of Congo as Foreign Office officials continued to negotiate for the release of four Britons and an American held since Sunday in Kinshasa, also accused of espionage.

Gregor Lusty, Third Secretary at the British Embassy in the former Zaire, was escorting a team of British soldiers and diplomats on a "routine" tour of the country's capital, as part of contingency planning for the evacuation of about 200 British citizens living there.

They were arrested near the international airport by soldiers manning roadblocks. According to the Congolese authorities, they were found carrying maps with the city's airports and other strategic installations highlighted. They have been held under "hotel arrest" while British colleagues tried to persuade Congolese officials that they were not spying.

Mr Lusty was not ordered to remain in his hotel under guard along with his colleagues because he had diplomatic immunity. But yesterday he was ordered out of the country by Gaetan Kakudji, the Interior Minister.

"A diplomat who was the guile in all of this, we have pronounced him persona non grata," he said. "He must leave the country today. I delivered the message to the British Ambassador. This is a situation which they have pro-

vided. In any country this would be espionage."

A British consular official, one of the British Ambassador's bodyguards, a member of the Royal Military Police Close Protection squad, and an American on attachment to the Foreign Office, were still being held in a Kinshasa hotel last night.

Late on Tuesday night Tony Lloyd, the Foreign Office Minister responsible for Africa, called Laurent Kabila, President of the Congo, to ask for the release of the five men.

"We totally reject allegations that they were spying or were involved in any spying activities," he said. "What they were doing was reviewing standard plans for consular and embassy evacuation in the event of an emergency in Kinshasa."

A Foreign Office spokesman said yesterday that "there are some hopes that they will be released soon". The spokesman said the treatment of the MoD and Foreign Office officials was "unhelpful, unwarranted and unnecessary".

Given the levels of tension in Kinshasa, which came close to failing to rebels last year in a war that has drawn in eight other countries amid reports of white mercenaries working on both sides, the British soldiers and others were lucky they were not beaten, or worse. Westerners visiting Kinshasa are routinely thrashed and threatened with mock executions and have their wallets emptied by local security forces.

Britain and America are suspected by Congolese officials of supporting the country's Tutsi-led rebels.

Four of the men being held in Kinshasa had flown to the capital on diplomatic visas.

Foreign Office sources said they were unlikely to be covered by diplomatic immunity.

The fifth member of the group, the ambassador's bodyguard, was also on a diplomatic visa but is based in Kinshasa.

Two MoD men were thought to be officers from Britain's Rapid Reaction Force which would be responsible for evacuating British nationals from the Democratic Republic of Congo if they were considered to be in danger. Defence sources dismissed suggestions that they were members of the special forces.

Douglas Scraffon, the British Ambassador, was allowed to visit the men and he told the Foreign Office they were in good health and had been well treated.

Late on Tuesday night Tony

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Britain and America are suspected by Congolese officials of supporting the country's Tutsi-led rebels.



The body of Ala al-Hams is carried through the streets of Rafah, hours after he was shot by Palestinian police

Arafat returns to quell Gaza violence

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER
IN JERUSALEM

supporters of the militant Islamic group, Hamas.

Arafat was presiding over justice more arbitrary and brutal than that previously administered by the Israelis, who ruled the area until 1994.

As the condemned man,

Raed al-Attar, 25, was led away by police after sentencing.

He shouted: "There is no justice in Palestine. This

court decision has been fabricated."

It was not clear when the sentence would be carried out.

The case against him underscored the difficulties of controlling rival security branches without clear mandates and illustrated the fric-

tion between clan justice and the rule of Mr Arafat's embryonic Palestinian Authority.

After the verdict shops in Rafah closed in solidarity with the three men and demonstrators hurled rocks and bottles at the Jouda family house.

Ala al-Hams, 18, who was killed by police in the ensuing violence, was swiftly buried in the Muslim fashion. Family members at the emotional funeral chanted: "Keep your dogs away from us, Arafat" — a reference to the Palestinian police, who then imposed a curfew.

Cook embarrassed on eve of Anglo-French tour

BY SAM KILEY
AFRICA CORRESPONDENT

THE Kinshasa arrests are an embarrassing blow to Anglo-French plans to forge a joint policy on Africa. They will confirm in the minds of many French officials that Britain is playing dirty on the dark continent.

Whatever the intentions of Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, and Hubert Vedrine, his French counterpart — who were due to meet for dinner in Ghana yesterday at the start of an historic joint tour of West Africa — British officials will be blushing in

the face of private taunts from the French that they were right all along. Since Uganda and Rwanda backed English-speaking Tufts to topple Mobutu Sese Seko in the then Zaire two years ago, French officials have insisted that they did so with the help of British and American spy agencies.

"It is all the work of the Defence Intelligence Agency [the Pentagon's espionage network] and MI6. The Brits come up with the ideas and the Americans with the funding," an African-based French official insisted as the rebels drove Mobutu from his marbled palaces.

France has been proven beyond any question to have supplied arms to Hutu extremists before, during and after the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 — further entrenching the perception that far from having a joint policy in Africa, London and Paris were bitterly at odds.

M Vedrine has gone to some lengths to wrest control of Africa's policy from an exclusive "French Cell" based in the Elysee Palace, which ruthlessly pursued French interests in Africa during the Mitterrand presidency.

M Chirac has been happy to see

the Quai d'Orsay sideline the French cell, partly as a result of the exposure of the extent of French support for the Hutus during the genocide.

But many French officials still resent deeply what they saw as Anglophone interference in the Congo and are quick to point out that America has deployed Green Berets to train Tutsis in Rwanda while, until recently, Britain had a military training team in Uganda.

Others go further in their suspicions. A member of the 11th "Shock" regiment — the military wing of the French spy agency, the DGSE —

once claimed to have killed a British SAS soldier serving with the Tutsis in Rwanda in 1991. "I shot him dead in the north of the country. The SAS were training the Tutsis, definitely, that's why they're so good in the jungle," he insisted.

The French and British Foreign Ministers are anxious to put such rivalries behind them and make good on their leaders' commitments at the Franco-British summit in December to share information and even embassies in Africa.

The two ministers will meet Ghana's President Rawlings today.

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North Korea ends in asy...

FROM DAVID WATTS IN BEIJING
A NORTH KOREAN diplomatic couple in Thailand last night after a van load of his fellow envoys tried to kidnap him and return him to Pyongyang.

Hong Sun Kyung and his wife were flown to the Thai capital after a "turnkey of envoys" in which local police at one point lost the couple, then apparently rescued them from a group of North Korean diplomats who were standing near an overturned van.

It is believed that the van crashed 20 miles northeast of Bangkok, as the diplomats were trying to smuggle the couple out of Thailand to Laos, from where they were to

Veteran car boss peddles battery bike

Lee Iacocca invests millions to get Americans into saddle, says Giles Whittell

AFTER decades as a cheerleader for America's gas-guzzling car culture, Lee Iacocca, the former Chrysler chairman, has abandoned his retirement and sunk several million of his own dollars into a scheme to sell 1,000 electric bicycles a week to pensioners, police officers and anyone else with a dread of pedalling uphill.

At \$995 (£610) for the basic model, the E-bike is not cheap, but neither is it purely for fun. And it should turn heads. It can outpace joggers and most urban traffic, purr along on cruise control and recharge in a few hours at any electric socket. But when *The Times* tested one, it proved too quiet to be noticed by the citizens of west Los Angeles, or simply too modest.

A 24-volt battery under the crossbar gives this hybrid brisk acceleration and a range of 20 miles at 15mph if not pedalled at all. With a determined athlete in the saddle, its range is limitless and mountain-bike gears are designed to make light work of pedalling a 65lb machine, roughly twice the weight of a typical bicycle.

Mr Iacocca has said modestly: "This isn't just a bicycle, it's a revolution."

But with the sedate lines of a women's shopper, it may struggle to ignite a craze in the land of stretch limousines.

Electric transport so far has been a dud in the United States. Thomas Edison, inventor of the lightbulb, assured Henry Ford nearly a century ago that the days of the internal combustion engine were numbered. Since then, despite choking smog and traffic jams, electric trolley buses have been removed from Los Angeles' streets and battery problems have made electric cars a playground of hobbyists and the rich.

Two years ago General Motors launched its EV-1, America's first battery-powered production car. It has since leased barely 400 of



Lee Iacocca pedals his "revolutionary" electric cycle

them, echoing Sir Clive Sinclair's heroic failure with the C5, a low-slung pod that positioned its rider on the level of other vehicles' exhaustpipes.

"In Asia and Europe the bicycle is part of the culture," Bill Moore, editor of *EV World* magazine, said. "Over here it's an exercise phenomenon. It's going to take a cultural shift to get people to start using it instead of their beloved four-wheel-drives to go to the barber's shop."

Mr Iacocca, 73, has led cultural shifts before and is the original celebrity industrialist. When Bill Gates was nine, Mr Iacocca appeared on the cover of *Newsweek* next to the first Ford Mustang, a chrome and steel paean to American manhood that was an instant hit. He went on to become chief executive of Ford, the rescuer (twice) of Chrysler and the author of an autobiography that sold nine million copies.

His Midas touch has not been infallible. He joined the reclusive billionaire Kirk Kirkorian in a doomed attempt to buy Chrysler after re-

tiring from it in 1992, and lent his name in 1995 to a low-fat burger substitute that failed to sell. With the E-bike, he may be on safer ground. It is being sold only through car dealerships, where his name recalls a golden age, and only in four warm states: California, Arizona, Florida and Hawaii. It is also being aimed at military bases, universities and retirement communities. California and Florida alone have 14,000 of them.

Hopes are high in the Los Angeles offices of Mr Iacocca's grandly named company, EV Global Motors. "We are going to electrify the Bahamas," said Irene DiVita, vice-president of corporate communications, brandishing an order for 50 E-bikes from the Bahamian pol-

ice force.

They may yet change the mainland, too. Pollution, global warming and time wasted in traffic jams have brought redoubled government efforts to wean Americans off petrol and out of cars. With tough new air-quality regulations on his side, Mr Iacocca aims to profit from a solution to a problem that he admits he helped to create. "I think I have one vision left in me before I die," he told *Time* magazine recently. "And it's electric."

There are other electric bikes on the market, but none have Mr Iacocca's name recognition and all live in the shadow of ghosts that came and went. Several small-town Canadian police forces use "Electro-cruisers" for their street patrols, sold for less than \$1,000 by ZAP Power Systems of San Francisco. Charger Bicycles and the Electric Transportation Company have more expensive models; Canada's Malcolm Bricklin is not so lucky. His \$2,000 EV Warrior electric bicycle venture, offering "the commuter vehicle of the future", went bankrupt two years ago.



Chrysler's future chairman with his tricycle as a boy

North Korean farce ends in asylum bid

FROM DAVID WATTS IN KUALA LUMPUR

A NORTH KOREAN diplomat sought asylum in Thailand last night after a van-load of his fellow envoys tried to kidnap him and return him to Pyongyang.

Hong Sun Gyoung and his wife were flown to the Thai capital after a journey of errors in which local police at one point lost the couple, having apparently rescued them from a group of North Korean diplomats who were standing near an overturned van.

It is believed that the van crashed 280 miles northeast of Bangkok as the diplomats were trying to sample the couple out of Thailand to Laos, from where they were to

taken to Pyongyang. The couple had cuts and bruises as a result of the accident.

Mr Hong, the Science and Technology Attaché, was missing in the middle of last month. The North Koreans accused him of embezzling technology that was to be used to buy rice from Thailand.

Last night Surin Pitsuwan, the Thai Foreign Minister, confirmed that Mr Hong had requested asylum and said that Thailand would protect him. Thailand has no extradition treaty with North Korea.

The North Korean Ambassador to Thailand has not returned to Bangkok since the scandal broke.

The Government has sent more than 3,000 troops into Ambon to maintain stability.

In the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, more than 1,000 students took to the streets calling for a holy war to avenge the deaths of Ambonese Muslims. "This is not about war," Irwan Senarnya said. "We just want to show the world that we Muslim people always suffer from Christians."

Most of Indonesia's 200 million people are Muslim, but the Spice Islands are predominantly Christian.

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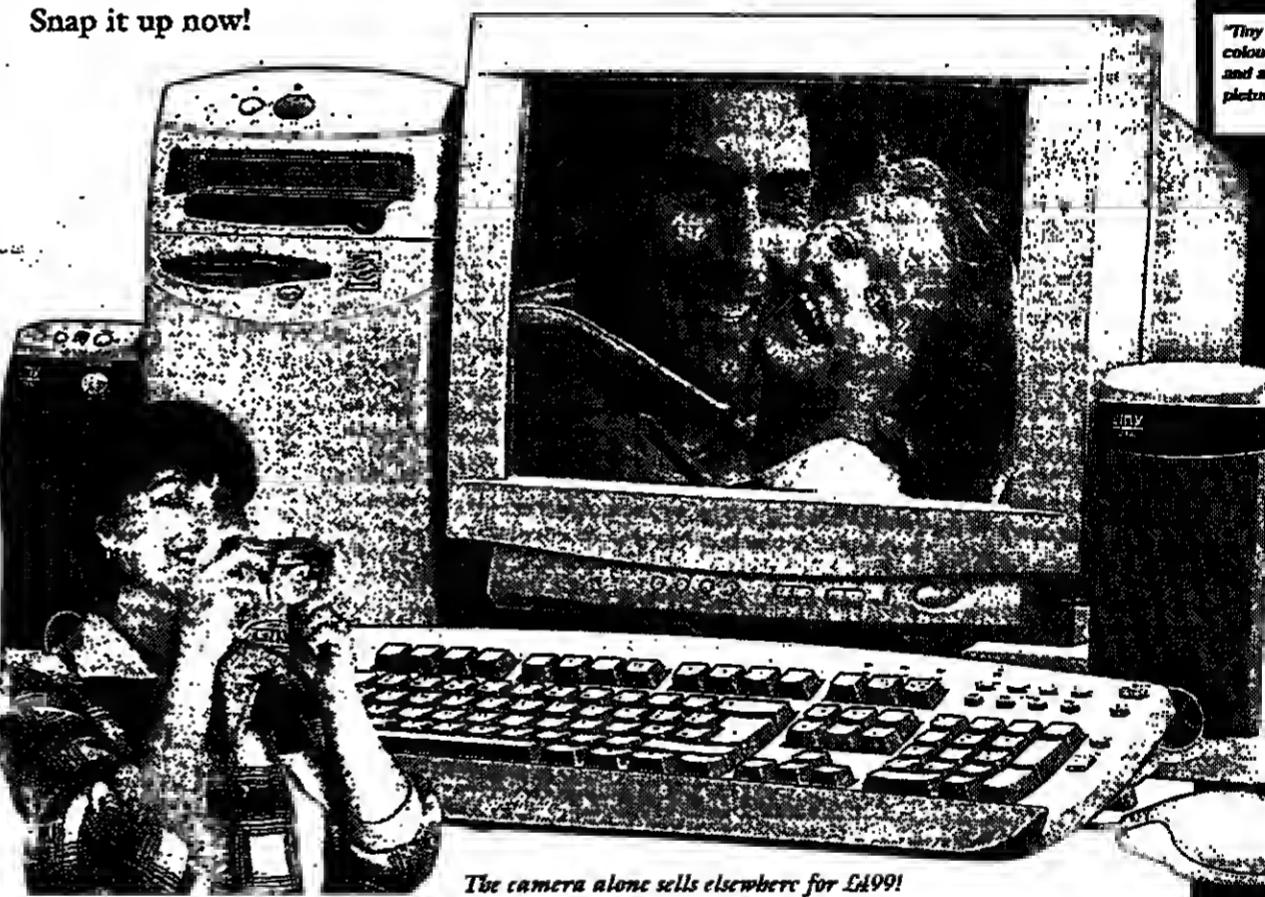
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THE TIMES THURSDAY MARCH 11 1999

OVERSEAS NEWS 17

Police protest delays sale of Italian royal antiques

Richard Owen reports on last-minute action as House of Savoy collection goes under the hammer in London



One of a fine set of six Italian painted panels

SOTHEBY'S was forced yesterday to freeze the sale of valuable 18th-century antiques from the collection of the former Italian Royal Family.

The House of Savoy, after Italian authorities intervened to object that they were part of the country's heritage.

General Roberto Conforti, head of the carabinieri anti-theft unit, who had asked the auction house to withdraw 24 lots of "exceptional value to the state", later agreed the sale could go ahead, subject to a 35-day "review" by Italian police of the export procedures involved. He said that if, at the end of that period, the Italian authorities were able to prove that items had been "improperly" exported, the sale would be declared invalid.

A notice was read to prospective buyers at the sale, in English and Italian, warning that selected pieces would not be released for 35 days, adding: "We are confident that the licences are in order."

Robin Woodhead, chief executive of Sotheby's Europe, was "amazed that the Italians should have raised objections at the last moment ... We have been discussing this with them since the sale was announced last November."

A Sotheby's spokesman said all the artefacts involved, including mirrors, inlaid tables and cabinets valued at up to £100,000 each, had "legally obtained export licences". He emphasised that the proceeds of the sale — which involved about 1,400 lots — were going to Italian charities set up to give jobs to the young, including a church-run school for furniture restoration.

But General Conforti said that the furniture amounted to a collection "of the highest national importance". Italian police said the disputed items had been presented individually for export in provincial centres such as Bologna, Genoa and Turin, the former seat of the House of Savoy, which ruled Italy from unification in 1870 until 1946. "If the items had been presented as a collection, and not broken up in this way, the export would almost certainly have been blocked," *La Repubblica* said.

Mr Woodhead said the an-

tiques were a "dealer's collection, not a national collection" and that the Italian Fine Arts authorities, in the various towns involved, had co-operated with each other. "There were 41 rooms of furniture, including French and German items as well as Italian ones." He said that there was "no judicial reason" to stop the sale, adding: "We have instructions from a client with full title, and have acted within the law. But we are sensitive to the Italian authorities, and so agreed to a 35-day moratorium."

Giovanni Melandri, the Minister of Culture, said investigations were continuing, adding: "I am pleased that General Conforti took timely action."

The general said that Sotheby's had shown the "sensitivity and respect towards Italy's heritage we expect from a serious auction house".

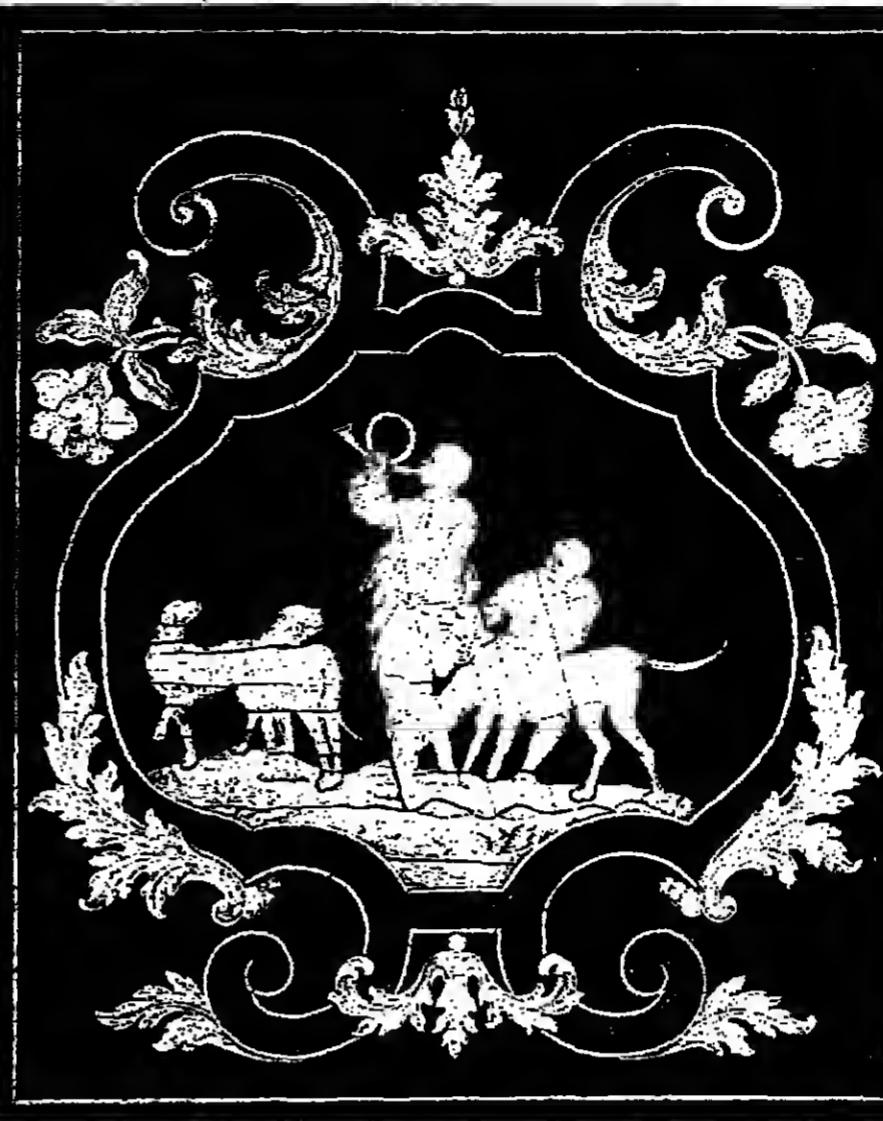
The collection was assembled by Giuseppe Rossi, a leading Turin antiques dealer who was close to the former Royal Family. He bought some items from former King Umberto, who lived in exile at Cascais in Portugal, and acquired others at auctions. He died ten years ago, and his property, including the royal antiques, passed to his sister, Maria Luisa Rossi, now 80, who decided to sell.

King Umberto II, the last monarch of the House of Savoy, left Italy in 1946 after a referendum that narrowly abolished the monarchy and founded the Italian Republic. Under the Italian Constitution, male members of the House of Savoy are barred from returning to Italy. But Prince Victor Emmanuel, the son of the last king, who lives in exile in Switzerland, has petitioned parliament to be allowed to return, provided he and his family do not seek to regain former royal properties or engage in politics. Most former Savoy palaces are now public museums.

General Conforti said that he had acted after Giovanni Nuzzo, the deputy prosecutor in Cremona, opened an investigation into the way that the export licences were obtained,

and after a number of MPs, including Fulio Colombo, and Raffaele Costa, both MPs for Piedmont, and Vittorio Sgarbi, an independent MP and noted fine arts authority, had asked Signora Melandri to intervene. *Panorama*, an Italian news magazine, said that the furniture and art objects formed "the most important collection of Italian antiques to be sold abroad this century". Carla Enrica Spannagl, Superintendent of Fine Arts in Turin, said that the collection should have stayed in Turin "... We have made enormous efforts to restore Savoy palaces and track down furniture and objects of art with which to furnish them. I am very alarmed at the way this was done."

Sotheby's said the sale had been a "huge success", raising millions of pounds. The disputed items all sold for at least



An ivory-inlaid detail from a 1720s bureau by Luigi Prinotto which went on sale

double their estimate. They include a tulipwood table inlaid with ivory by Pietro Piffetti, which fetched £342,000; an ornate gilded mirror by Giuseppe Bonzanigo, which went for £166,500; a commode, by Bonzanigo, sold for £188,500; and a tulipwood and gilt cabinet by Gallotti, fetched £34,500. Many of the pieces carry the Savoy coat of arms.

Last month Gianni Agnelli, the powerful head of Fiat, who is an international consultant on the board of Sotheby's, held a dinner at an exclusive Turin club for Signora Rossi, the Mayor of Turin, and leading Italian dealers and collectors to underline the importance of the collection and the philanthropic aims of the sale.



One of a pair of carved gilt garlands

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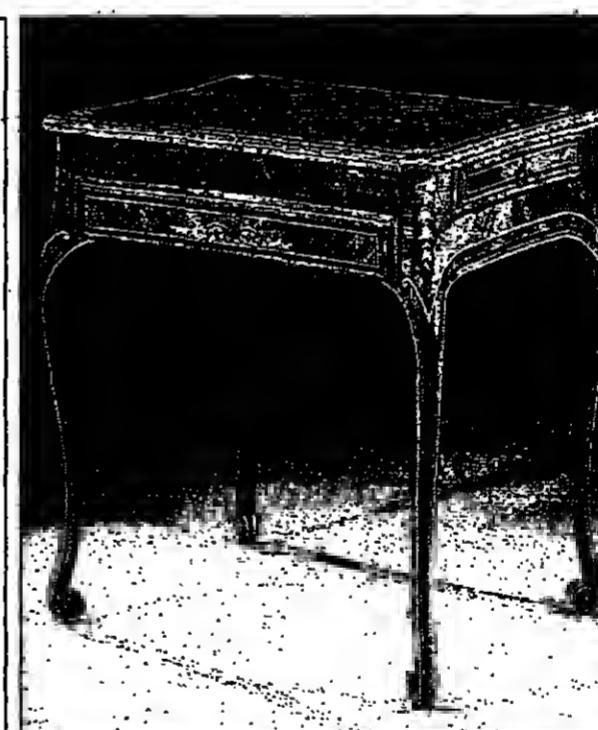
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The tulipwood table by Piffetti fetched £342,000

Angry Belgians seek to build 'Francophonia'

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

IT SOUNDS like something from the Marx Brothers, but the European Union could find itself early in the next century with a new member state at its heart that goes by the name of Francophonia.

In the minds of outraged French-speaking politicians, this nation of five million people would be the logical conclusion of a push for separate powers this month by Flanders, the Dutch-speaking northern half of Belgium.

The push by the Flemish regional parliament has galvanised the country's French-speaking leaders into a rare united stand against what they see as a move to split Belgium into an independent Flanders and a French-speaking nation. Under President Van den Brande, the Flemings say that they are not seeking full independence but a "confederation of separate states" in which the concept of Belgium would fade away.

Especially galling for the French-speakers is Flanders's

designs on Brussels, a Flanders enclave with 85 per cent French-speakers that is a separate region as well as national capital and de facto seat of the European Union.

The new Flemish scheme would bring Brussels under direct control by both French and Dutch speakers, but this is seen by French-speakers as a ploy leading to full Flemish control.

With Belgian general elections three months away, all the main parties in the Flemish parliament backed the demand for control over tax-raising and spending.

If granted, these powers would greatly extend the devolution that finished in 1993 with a complex federal structure made up of three regions

Flanders, French-speaking Wallonia, and Brussels – and three "language communities". These represent Dutch speakers, French speakers and the small minority of German speakers in the east of the country.

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China tightens grip on Tibet

Communists still fear revolt 40 years after flight of the Dalai Lama, reports James Pringle from Beijing

WITH China's huge military garrison in Tibet on full alert yesterday, the fortieth anniversary of the bloody uprising that led to the Dalai Lama's flight into exile, the Tibetan spiritual leader said in India that Beijing had intensified the repression of his people and would not hold talks.

"A lack of political will and courage on the part of the Chinese leadership has resulted in their failure to reciprocate my numerous overtures," the 14th Dalai Lama told 4,000 Tibetans in Dharamsala, site of his government-in-exile.

As troops in riot gear guarded Lhasa's streets, security patrols on rooftops around the central Jokhang Temple watched pilgrims, turning prayer-wheels and murmuring mantras, quietly marking national uprising day. This was the occasion on March 10, 1959, when battles began that left thousands of Tibetans dead and resulted in the god king fleeing over the Himalayan passes.

In Beijing, a senior Tibetan official, Raidi, used the strident language of the Cultural Revolution to abuse the Dalai Lama: he was a "splitist" and a "loyal tool used by anti-China forces".

The People's Daily said that Tibetan society before Chinese intervention "was darker and more cruel than Europe's system of serfdom in the Middle Ages". The Communist Party newspaper added: "It can be said to have been one of the world's most serious violators

of human rights. One Western diplomat in Beijing said: "Seldom has the outlook for the return of the Dalai Lama and the survival of Tibetan culture looked so bleak."

Indirect communication with Beijing broke down late last year at the same time as China's leaders, afraid of social unrest because of widespread job losses in the state sector, cracked down on Chinese political dissidents.

President Jiang Zemin had surprised critics last June dur-

'Monks and nuns who shout slogans in praise of their exiled god king are tortured'

ing a visit to Beijing by President Clinton by offering talks with the Dalai Lama on condition that he recognised Tibet and Taiwan as parts of China.

The Dalai Lama, the 1989 Nobel Peace laureate, said yesterday that he had requested a meeting with Beijing before responding to President Jiang's comments but was snubbed.

Observers note that he always speaks of autonomy, not independence, for Tibet and advocates non-violence.

In Beijing an important

exhibition shows the alleged benefits that the Tibetans have enjoyed since Chinese troops invaded the territory in 1950, and the official press is full of articles praising Communist Party rule in Tibet, without mentioning the destruction visited on Tibetan monasteries and religion during the Cultural Revolution.

When the Dalai Lama left with 30,000 followers for Dharamsala, a former British hill station, it was only to be a brief exile they thought.

But 40 years on, the Dalai Lama remains in exile, looking ever less likely to return to his winter residence at the Potala, and to the 2.5 million Tibetans in what is now the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Yet if the 63-year-old spiritual leader did return he would scarcely recognise Lhasa, the capital which, with the exception of an enclave around the Jokhang, looks like any other drab Chinese city.

He has described what is happening as "some kind of cultural genocide".

About 100,000 ethnic Chinese have poured into Lhasa looking for a better life. For the first time, Lhasa has traffic jams as well as lurid advertising hoardings, tacky high-rise blocks and pollution.

The Chinese authorities control Lama Buddhism rigidly and crush any opposition. According to human rights groups, monks and nuns who shout slogans in praise of the Dalai Lama or independence are tortured.

The Dalai Lama at a ceremony in Dharamsala yesterday commemorating the revolt

Hollywood crusaders join protest

FROM GILES WHITTELL
IN LOS ANGELES

TWELVE time zones from California, and travelling without the perquisites of stardom, Richard Gere and Goldie Hawn lent star power if not political clout to the gathering of Tibetan exiles in northern India. Mr Gere, a practising Buddhist and friend of the Dalai Lama, has become a regular visitor to Dharamsala on the anniversaries of the 1959 Tibetan uprising, not least because he is barred from Tibet itself. "The human

rights situation is getting worse," the actor told one reporter. "The Chinese are carrying out a systematic genocide."

Such outspokenness has not endeared him to Beijing, which banned him from Tibet when its flight became Hollywood's most fashionable foreign policy

crusade with the release of two major films two years ago. Harrison Ford and his wife, as well as Steven Seagal (who claims to be a reincarnation of a holy Tibetan icon), were among those denied visas to the remote country as Hollywood's interest rose to fever pitch with the making of *Seven Years in Tibet*, starring Brad Pitt, and Gere's *Red Corner*.

Ms Hawn, mingling at the gathering with Tibetans who had made the trans-Himalayan trek, said: "It breaks my heart that these gentle people have been the object of abuse."

WORLD IN BRIEF

Libyans guilty of French bombing

Paris: Six Libyan intelligence agents, including the brother-in-law of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, were sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment (Susan Bell writes). A French anti-terrorism court found them guilty of the 1989 bombing of a French aircraft in which all 170 people on board, including four Britons, died.

France has issued international arrest warrants and will apply to Libya to impose the verdict on the six men — or face reinforced sanctions. The trial came as Colonel Gaddafi seemed set to hand over two Libyans to face charges in Europe in connection with the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie in Scotland in which 270 people died.

TV plea to Redgrave

Los Angeles: The estranged husband of Lynn Redgrave, the British-born actress, has made a television appeal for her to drop divorce proceedings and continue their 32-year marriage. "Look, I'm 66 years old. You [Redgrave] were 56 years old just yesterday, and I just think we're a little old for all this nonsense," John Clark, a director, said in a television interview. "So please, I love you. Settle down and lighten up." Ms Redgrave filed for divorce on March 1. (Reuters)

Antigua re-elects PM

St John's, Antigua: Car horns blared and supporters jumped for joy as Lester Bird, 61, whose party has dominated Antiguan politics for decades, won a convincing election victory and was returned as Prime Minister — despite charges of corruption. Mr Bird's Antigua Labour Party won 12 of 17 parliamentary seats in Tuesday's election, one more seat than it held in the previous Government. (AP)

Lusaka reporters held

Harare: Four Zambian journalists were arrested, a fifth is on the run and a sixth was refusing to allow police to enter his home as President Chiluba's Government cracked down on "unpatriotic" press (Jan Raath writes). All are reporters on the independent daily Post, which said that Zambia's ill-equipped army of 20,000 could be easily crushed by a 10,000-strong division from neighbouring Angola.

Meteorite from Mars

Scientists have identified a new meteorite from Mars after an anonymous donor handed it in to a museum in Italy (Nicholas Booth writes). It is the fourteenth known fragment of the Red Planet to be identified after landing on Earth. The sample, the size of a coconut and weighing about 5lb, was found in the Libyan Desert near Dar al Gami in the Sahara.

Back to the USSR

Moscow: Russia's Communist and nationalist-dominated parliament voted overwhelmingly to reintroduce the Soviet anthem — but without lyrics. The provisional anthem will stay wordless while poets struggle to find the sentiments to fit the melody. Bringing back the Soviet-era tune would have to be approved by President Yeltsin, seen as unlikely. (AFP)



Annie Lennox and a Tibetan torture victim in London



The Dalai Lama at a ceremony in Dharamsala yesterday commemorating the revolt

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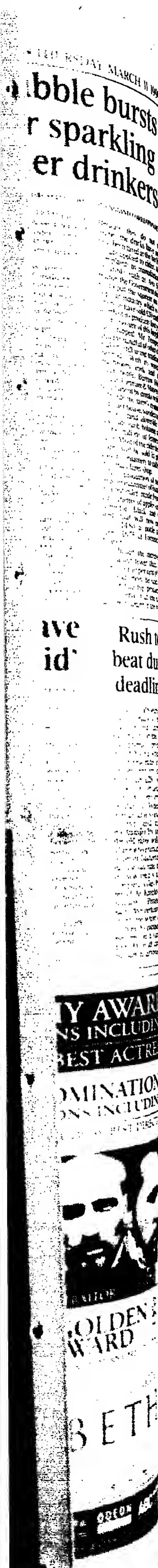
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OVERSEAS NEWS 19



President Clinton listens to a speech by President Flores of Honduras during a tour of areas affected by Hurricane Mitch last year

China policy blamed for US spy scandal

Damian Whitworth reports from Washington on the search to explain lax missile security

THE Clinton Administration was desperately trying to defend its relationship with China yesterday as criticism grew over the way it reacted to suspicions of major nuclear weapons espionage.

Al Gore, the Vice-President, aware that the furor over the sacking of a suspected Chinese spy could severely damage his hopes of winning the presidency, blamed former Presidents Reagan and Bush for the alleged passing of top secret information to China.

This did not stop furious accusations that the Clinton White House had been lax about tightening security and catching the spy because it feared upsetting China.

It is charged that Mr Clinton was anxious not to upset China at a time when he was preparing for the "strategic partnership" summit in 1997 and his administration was facing an investigation into claims that China had been given information that enabled it to leap a generation in the construction of nuclear weapons and develop missiles with multiple warheads each capable of destroying a city.

The information was believed to have been passed in the 1980s, but its theft was discovered in 1996 and reported to the White House. Mr Clinton has been accused by Republicans of failing to tell Congress about the discovery, being complacent about the need for stricter security and taking no action to catch the suspected spy. Mr Lee may have been under investigation for up to three years.

It is charged that Mr Clinton was anxious not to upset China at a time when he was preparing for the "strategic partnership" summit in 1997 and his administration was facing an investigation into claims that China had partly funded his 1996 campaign.

Mr Gore insisted that the fault lay with the presidents of the late 1980s and claimed that

"Having a relationship with which we can try to affect their behaviour and improve human rights, eliminate unfair trade practices and bring about the kind of changes that will lead to further democratization in China [is] in our interest," he said.

But Republicans once again smell blood and Trent Lott, the Senate majority leader, said it was clear there had been "tax security" and an investigation would be launched to find out why it had taken so long to address the security problems.

Christopher Cox, the Republican chairman of a select committee investigating US military and commercial dealings with China, said he feared that it was part of a pattern in which weapons labs "failed to take even minimal steps necessary for counter intelligence".

The spy row comes as the White House prepares for a visit next month by the Zhu Rongji, the Chinese Prime Minister, amid tension over the targeting of Chinese missiles at Taiwan.



Heng's view in Lianhe Zaobao, Singapore, of the Chinese-American spy affair

Friends shocked by charges

BY DAMIAN WHITWORTH

THE scientific community at the supposedly top-secret, high-security nuclear weapons research laboratory at Los Alamos is reeling after the dismissal of a quiet, friendly colleague who is suspected of being the Chinese spy at the centre of the biggest espionage scandal in years.

Those who worked with Wen Ho Lee at the National Laboratory in the foothills of

the Rockies in New Mexico and were his neighbours in the suburban community that has sprouted near by, said they were bewildered that he should have been fingered as the guilty man and cast out.

Mr Lee, in his late fifties, is understood to have been at Los Alamos since 1978 and in the 1980s began looking at nuclear weapon design and in particular how thermonuclear bombs are triggered. His alleged involvement in spying was reportedly traced to his trip to China in the late 1980s.

Smoking cowboy packs it in

FROM GILES WHITTELL
IN LOS ANGELES

HE WAS six storeys tall, towering over Sunset Boulevard with the mystique of an outsider and the confidence of a man who appears to know his own desires. Now the world's most famous Marlboro Man is gone, outlawed by a clause in the \$206 billion (£126 billion) settlement between tobacco firms and state governments that requires all cigarette billboards in America to come down by April 23.

For many, this red-shirted cowboy beside the Chateau Marmont hotel where John Belushi died of an overdose transcended advertising. A 1991 Los Angeles Times art review described it as "a more enduring urban monument than almost any other building in Los Angeles".

But a crew arrived on Tuesday morning to prove once again that only impermanence is permanent in this place of lifestyle. One onlooker called the sign an institution and its passing "a real shame".

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Dr Thomas Stuttaford
reports on babies and jaundice; a new comb that kills lice; James Major and postural hypotension; transient ischaemic attacks (TIAs); and conditions that affect driving ability

Spotting the danger of jaundice

When a baby is developing in the womb, bilirubin, the bile pigment, crosses the placental barrier and an all-providing mother excretes them. A healthy newborn is pink — or bright red — but within a day or two many show signs of jaundice.

In most cases this physiological jaundice merely gives babies a healthy look, more like a tan than a yellow hue. Once a baby has to bathe with the world on its own, it has to excrete its own bilirubin, and if the system is late in clocking in, the bilirubin then starts to accumulate.

Premature babies are much more likely to be jaundiced than those who are delivered at term, but whatever the cause a close check is kept on it and the doctors make certain that it never reaches a point where damage is done to the child. Physiological jaundice clears more quickly if the baby is feeding well and kept well hydrated.

Physiological, normal, jaundice starts to show after two or three days and has usually disappeared by the time the child is a week old, although tests may show that the blood's bilirubin level is still raised until the tenth day. Fortunately it is usually mild, the baby is not unwell and does not stop feeding. Jaundice in the first two days, or persisting after the tenth day, always needs special investigation.

There are various causes of jaundice that show almost immediately after birth, including incompatibility between the mother's and the child's blood, unusual fragility of a baby's red blood cells, and

sometimes an infection may cause early jaundice.

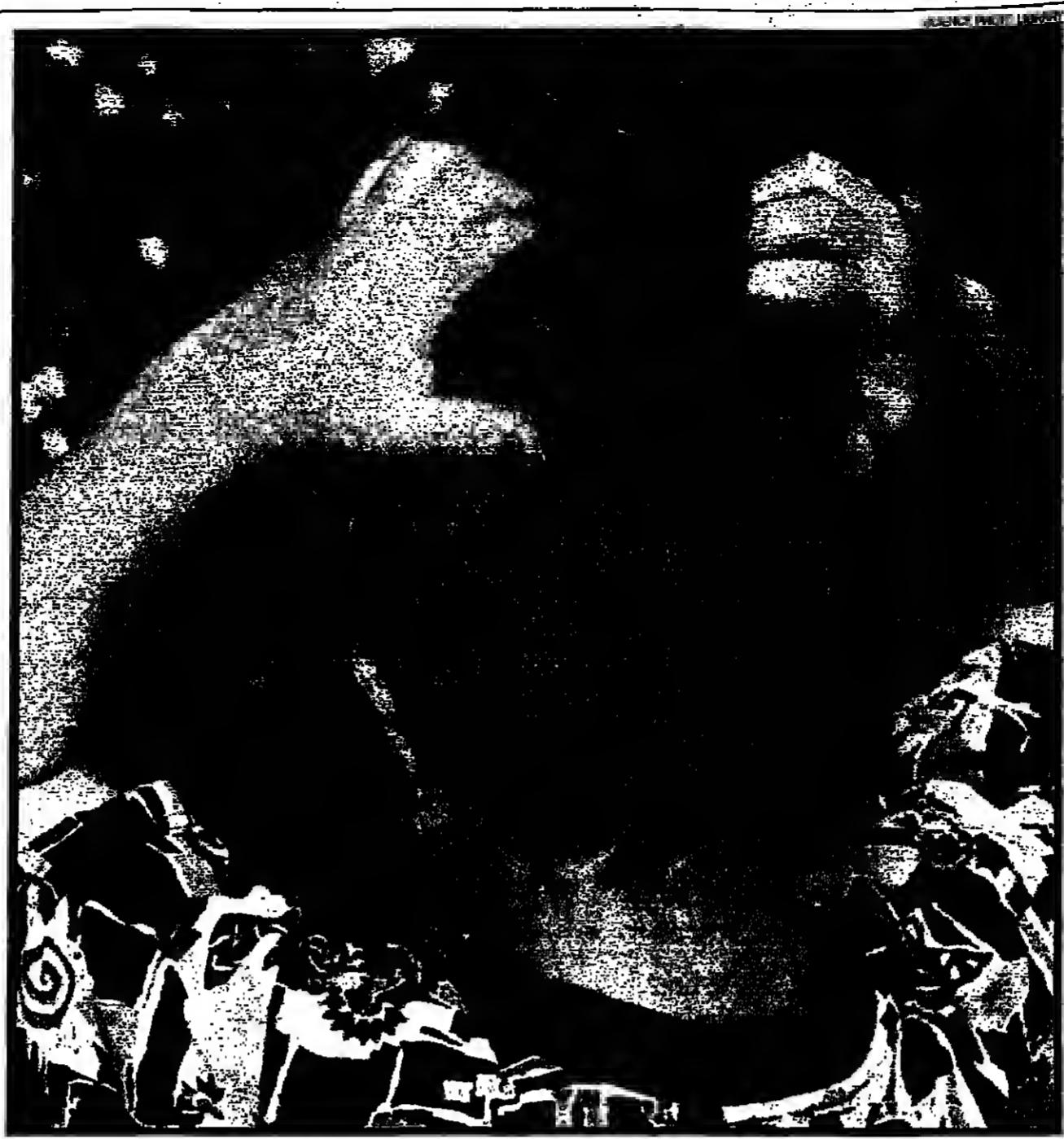
The causes of neo-natal jaundice, which comes on between the second and fifth day, at the same time as the physiological type, include various metabolic diseases in the mother and infections in the baby, especially those of the urinary and bile tracts.

Late onset, persistent jaundice, from ten to 14 days, is not always the result of breastfeeding, as is too often asserted, albeit that breast-fed babies tend to remain jaundiced for a longer period. Above all else, biliary atresia and an underactive thyroid are two very important causes of persistent jaundice which need early diagnosis and treatment. If an underactive thyroid, hypothyroidism, is not diagnosed and treated within a fortnight or so, the chances of a complete recovery and normal development are significantly reduced.

Likewise, biliary atresia, in which the bile ducts both inside and outside the liver become progressively blocked as the result of an inflammatory process, needs urgent surgical treatment. Surgery before eight weeks is essential if the baby is to have the best chance of a successful operation. If the bile drainage is not established, liver function slowly deteriorates and then the child's only hope of long-term survival is a liver transplant.

The Children's Liver Disease Foundation has drawn attention to the difference in outcome between this life-saving operation — the Kasaiportoenterostomy, which

If jaundice
persists
after ten
days it
must be
acted on'



Itchy scalp: every school term sees a series of outbreaks of lice. The insects are easily spread through shared brushes

Can't get rid of hair lice?
Fry them

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY and its medical entomology centre in particular, has always been in the forefront of the battle against lice.

Recently the centre produced a paper on laboratory tests of the Robi Comb, a battery-powered comb that zaps the creatures by electrocuting or dehydrating them in an effective method of detection and control. The incidence of attacks waxes and wanes; during the Second World War they were very prevalent. The lice that affect human beings are of three different types — those that live on the head, the body or in the creases of clothes. The present scourge among children is head lice.

It is estimated that about four million people, not all of them children, catch lice each year. The life span of a louse is only 40 days but it can lay many hundreds of eggs during that time. The eggs are attached to the base of hair shafts and are known as nits. The start of every school term sees a series of outbreaks as lice are easily spread by shared brushes or head-to-head contact in the playground. If the hair is fair, the lice are light in colour; in a blonde they are brown.

There are many chemicals that will poison lice but parents are concerned about their toxicity. The Robi Comb delivers an electrical charge from a 1.5-volt battery. No shock reaches the patient as every alternate tooth is covered by a resin, preventing a circuit from being set up with the scalp. As the comb is drawn through the hair it buzzes, but the buzzing stops each time it comes into contact with a louse. The louse is brushed away, buzzing restarts and combing can then continue.

Tense time for James Major

James Major and the vicar of a parish within the remit of my former practice do not have much in common, other than a tendency to suffer from postural hypotension.

Both, it seems, are likely to collapse if they stand up too quickly, particularly if they are tired and tense.

What would be an incident of no concern other than to their friends and family becomes a general talking point because, in different ways, both the vicar and the son of the former Prime Minister are public figures. My vicar's worry — he was a strait-laced man who only occasionally blew the dust off his shiny bottle before pouring a small glass for favoured parishioners after church — was that his flock might think he was drunk. It is well-known that postural hypotension, also known as orthostatic hypotension, is worse after drinking.

The blood pressure of sufferers falls dramatically when they rise to their feet. Their circulation is slow to respond to the increased demands of the upright posture.

This is because there is some impairment in the sensors in the arteries which stimulate the changes in the circulation that compensate for the upright position and enable the heart to keep the brain supplied with blood. Without an adequate blood supply to

the brain, a person collapses in a crumpled heap and may, occasionally, even have a seizure.

The condition is much more common in the overstressed and in those of middle age and beyond — people who are

more of the age of the conscientious person than James Major.

In the elderly many of the drugs used to treat blood pressure can have this effect — as can antidepressants and anti-psychotic drugs — because

these drugs reduce the sensitivity of the sensors.

The only recreational drugs — if they can be called that — that increase the likelihood of postural hypotension are alcohol, which increases the tendency of blood to pool in the feet, and barbiturates, which dull the senses. Drugs with an amphetamine-type reaction, including Ecstasy and cocaine, reduce the tendency to this problem.

This vasodilatation is also enhanced if the person has a temperature, the room is very warm, or if they are overtired. All these conditions cause swelling in the lower extremities, even if the arterial sensors are working well. A heavy meal increases the circulation of the blood to the stomach at the expense of the rest of the body. This, too, increases the likelihood of sudden collapse upon standing upright.

What is the best treatment? Deal with any particular cause, such as heart disease or diabetes. If there is no such cause, increase the number of early nights, try not to wine and dine too abundantly and, if sitting in a warm restaurant, rise to your feet very slowly. If lying flat it is as well to sit on the edge of the bed before standing up — a discovery made by many pregnant women, who are also likely to suffer from it.



James Major collapsed during a night out with Emma Noble

A new spin on advice to drivers

DOCTORS

are frequently asked by patients about ailments that would necessitate restrictions on driving. Even more often, doctors feel obliged to bring this issue up themselves, even if it means missing out on a bottle of whisky at Christmas from a grateful patient.

The DVLA sends a booklet to GPs which provides guidance on this thorny subject. Now Dr Nicholas Millard, a GP in Malvern, Worcestershire, has teamed up with Boehringer Ingelheim in Bracknell, Berkshire, to produce a revolving disc that gives doctors immediate access to information that helps them to advise their patients.

All the common conditions that make driving unsuitable can be found around

the edge of the disc. Several operations are considered to be a bar to driving for a period. A GP could, for example, centre the disc on a transient ischaemic attack to learn that the ordinary domestic driver who has had his first attack should hide his car keys for a month.

If such a patient was a Group 2 driver — licensed to drive a heavy-goods vehicle or a minibus with more than eight seats — he should be off the driving roster for three months. Drivers in both categories

should consult their doctors before returning to the driver's seat.

Private drivers with high blood pressure do not face a ban, but a heavy-goods driver is barred until blood pressure is reduced to under 180/100.

Angina is only a contraindication to private driving if it is induced by driving, or comes on at rest, when it should be abandoned until the symptoms have been controlled.

Surgery may also make driving hazardous and doctors should consult the DVLA about operations that they think might impair a patient's driving. The same advice applies when it comes to several different groups of drugs (even if they are not actually a bar) that may affect driving skills.

Warning signs of ischaemia

JONATHAN ATKEN'S transient ischaemic stroke has been widely reported. Initial accounts suggested that he had problems with his vision for a short time but he is now back to normal.

A firm diagnosis of a transient ischaemic attack, TIA, is difficult to make and is dependent on the patient's description of what happened. However, there may be associated conditions — an irregular heartbeat, a narrowed carotid artery to the neck, diabetes, high blood pressure or some other disease process which, when combined with the patient's account, make it highly likely.

Usually patients lose function in part of their body so that there may be temporary weakness in an arm or a leg, loss of sensation or unusual feelings, such as pins and needles. It is not uncommon for there to be a transient loss of vision in one eye, a condition

known as amaurosis fugax. Likewise, hearing can be lost or even the power of speech — aphasia. In any TIA there is a small clot, an embolus, that blocks an artery for a while before moving on.

A TIA is of sudden onset and lasts for only a short time. If it persists for more than 24 hours it is not included in this category. It has to be distinguished from migraine, which can have similar signs and symptoms.

The treatment for a TIA is the treatment for any underlying cause, coupled with anti-clot treatment. Patients will need to take aspirin regularly, combined with Persantin Retard (dipyridamole). Recently a new preparation, Plavix (clopidogrel), has been introduced.

Before TIAs were routinely treated, one out of six patients had suffered a major stroke within five years.

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FEATURES 21

The Speer that I knew



Albert Speer was a complex man, fearful of society's vulnerability to charisma — a far cry from the grotesque character depicted in a new play, says Gitta Sereny, author of the definitive biography on Hitler's "great manager"

I went to the theatre last week to see in English a play I had already watched on German television last year. It was called *Speer*. The last time Albert Speer rang me was on August 31, 1981. My husband and I were in the country for the Bank Holiday weekend, and by the time we heard him saying he was in London for 24 hours and said not to find us in, it was after 10pm on September 1 and he was dead.

Between that last humorous message — "I wanted to surprise you," spoken in his heavily accented English, no doubt so that my husband, whom he particularly liked, could understand him — and our first telephone conversation four years earlier, on July 15, 1977, he had phoned me, oh, probably 50, perhaps even 100 times. After the first year, during which we

initiated with his French counterpart, Jean Bichelonne, in July 1943. "It is inevitable," he said, and indeed it has materialised as the European Union. He was equally prescient about the economic inevitability of national and international mergers within the newspaper and publishing industry and, with it, increasing populism at the expense of quality.

And — almost the only times he still brought up comparisons with his experience in the Third Reich — he often spoke of his fears above all for the young, of the ever-rising influence of television: "We can only guess the extent to which Goebbels's dominance over radio and all other media programming won millions of minds for Hitler."

I read in my notes of one conversation we had in 1980: I think we were discussing a dreadful film somebody in Hollywood had recently made about him. "Film and, more than that, television, can do this again, I fear, for future potential despots," he said. "And next time, it won't even need a propaganda genius like Goebbels because ambition and competition — ie, money — will drive the powerful visual media to outdo each other in dramatising evil people and evil events even more grippingly, poisoning the young."

Some of this, as I say, are things he said to me not once but many times over the years. We knew each other. Some of it is in letters or essays he wrote in prison and later gave to me. And some of it, of course, is in the book I wrote about him, though not all because the book was already too long. But all of it — representing not only a large part of what he had written, but what he had read, thought about and the conclusions he had reached during 20 years in prison and then 15 more years until he died — was about the origin of evil, the portents of scientific and technical developments for the future of young generations. And always the most intriguing and most dangerous to him, the vulnerability of societies, but even more, of individuals, to charisma ("There we always stand on the thinest edge between Scylla and Charybdis," he said.)

A lot of the questions I asked her for the book, and his answers, and statements from other books, including his own, were used in the play. This is normal: unadapted literature is not — cannot — be visual or audible drama. But in the case of the play we are discussing, we are faced with a moral question. I am not referring to the manipulations of historic facts and personalities of which he had tried to

foresee enormous economic developments in Russia, and with them — prophetically, one might think — increasing freedoms accompanied by deep conflicts. He was always certain, and eager to indicate to me every political statement that pointed towards it, of an eventual European economic union, a beginning of which he had tried to



Albert Speer and Adolf Hitler studying the plans for a new Berlin in 1938.

Speer designed the Zeppelinfeld tribune in Nuremberg, the site of the Nazi rallies



Speer in 1973; he died in 1981

that many great playwrights, Shakespeare most of all, engaged in. His comment came after the moderator had asked one of the panel, Heinz Dürr, who until two years ago was head of German railways, whether, if he had held that job under Hitler, he would have kept up — as the incumbent of the time, Theodor Ganzmüller, did — the careful scheduling of the freight trains that took Jews to the extermination camps.

Dürr, a tall, well-dressed man with a quiet managerial manner, pondered for a long time before he answered: "I have to say yes, I would have. I was a Nazi-educated boy, indoctrinated to do my duty, and this would quite simply and without further thought have been a normal part of duty."

Esther Vilar, sitting next to him, shook her head, smiling at him. "I don't believe you," she said. "You wouldn't have." Dürr tried again. "I know it is very hard to see it today as it was, but that's how we were." Vilar was still smiling: "I think it is a masochistic answer. You don't know yourself," she said, consoling her. Sentimentality and prejudice are anathema to art.

And this is where Brandauer came in: "I find it wonderful, Herr Dürr, that you are saying honestly as it was then. You were brought up a Nazi boy and such a person, grown up, you say, would not have reflected, would just have acted as he was taught to do ... I am so tired of all those people who, 60 years later, can only manage the answer 'we didn't know'. I'm so grateful to you for facing yourself as you would have been. We cannot, must not, criticise such honesty [storm of applause from the audience], for only this can bring us further."

We cannot go into the means Vilar's interrogator employs to force her Speer into submission. For although factually, often grossly, incorrect, the history of the origin of these quite devastating misinterpretations, (which, certainly not of her making, she unfortunately adopted from the subjective writing of others) is too complicated to analyse here.

However, her own almost total lack of understanding of Speer's personality is demonstrated in the last 15 minutes of the play, when the apparent reason for the invitation emerges (I will not give away the real one — disclosed in the last

three minutes — which some people, though not I, might find entertaining). It is that East Germany's head of state, Erich Honecker, was inviting Hitler's great manager, Speer, to save the crumbling economy of East Germany.

Having spent 75 minutes watching the physical antics and above all listening to the choleric responses of Speer — who would never have gone to East Berlin in the first place, and who was the most re-

strained and self-controlled man, manifesting even the deepest anger by total stillness and a quiet, icy voice — one is not surprised when this grotesque figure manifests interest in this offer and even provides a quick and modern solution to the problem of East Germans escaping to the West: a microchip implanted, on some health pretext, into every citizen.

"That could be one solution to the problem," he says. One would have laughed if all

that ignorance had not been so shocking and all that waste of skill and energy so sad.

In *Vilar's Speer*, the years of his life before and after Hitler never happened: we see nothing of his youth, which caused the breakdown of his morality, we see nothing of the "different man" that the real Speer fought to become. All that any young people (hoping to learn more about this complex figure) will see — indeed, most of us will see, because that is

what the playwright, in her misguided lack of faith in the capacity and power of remorse, wants us to see — is a cold man moved by nothing except ambition who, as Vilar triumphantly shows in those outrageous last 15 minutes, is the same moral zero in 1980 that he was during the 12 years of Hitler's rule.

• Speer runs until March 27 at the Almeida, Islington. 0171-359 4404

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Sons of the Vikings with axes to grind

When it comes to island life, it's ministers who are insular

You need to be tough to survive in Britain's northern islands. Perhaps that is why the Vikings, who settled there a thousand years ago, chose those fearsome names: Thorfinn Skulldumper, Thorstein the Red, Erik Bloody-Axe, and his daughter Ragnhild, described as "a high-born woman of the tigress-harlot type, a consumer of men, thirsting for the blood of her lovers like a female spider". These days things are more conventional. The Islanders call their children Ryan and Meg, like the rest of us, and their social habits, so far as I can determine, are rather more prosaic than those of their Viking ancestors. But they still need to be tough.

Standing on a bleak hillside in Orkney last weekend, my ankles deep in mud as a gale whipped the foam off a dark grey sea, I marvelled at how the island farmers hang on. For almost a year now they have had relentless rain, the worst weather conditions that many of them can remember. They have seen their tractors sink into sodden fields, the value of their sheep collapse, their beef hit by the BSE embargo, their milk and cereal prices at rock-bottom and their European subsidies reduced by the strong pound. On top of all this, as islanders, they face the added cost of transport. To ferry a cow from Orkney to Aberdeen costs £2 a head; for sheep it is £5, which is often as much as the sale price at the end of the journey. To fly from the island's capital, Kirkwall, to Edinburgh, costs more than a return flight from London to Málaga. I once worked out that for the price of an air ticket from London to Shetland and back, I could buy a round-trip package to Sydney.

And now comes the Budget, with its steep increase in fuel prices. From behind the dispatch box, the Chancellor was able to describe it as a useful measure for protecting the environment. Higher petrol prices, he argued, would mean fewer cars choking up polluted high streets; cheaper road fund licences for small cars would penalise big gas-guzzlers, belching out their noxious fumes.

But when your high street is a winding country road and your vehicle is a battered Ford truck, all this talk of aiding the environment rings a little hollow. For the farmer, it simply means another financial burden. Already fuel costs in the Highlands are the highest in the country, and the Chancellor's extra tax will see petrol in Orkney inching close to £4 a gallon, a full pound more than for the motorist on the mainland. The increase in diesel in particular, by 6.1p per litre, was described by one farmer I spoke to as "devastating".

In any other industry, financial penalties of this order would be the cause of furious protest. One can imagine the response from provincial France, where farmers would by now be blocking main roads, releasing live pigs into Downing Street and dumping slurry in ministerial backyards. From Orkney the re-



Magnus Linklater

A politician at the peak of his popularity and power faces an obvious problem: there is nowhere to go but down. This surely ought to be a worry for Gordon Brown. I say this partly because of the growing sense, inspired by the changeover plan for the euro, that the whole Blair Government is in danger of succumbing to a generalised hubris, while William Hague is finally beginning to get to grips with his job. After the ecstatic reception accorded this week to his third Budget, Mr Brown now faces a much more specific and concrete problem: "Everyone's winner — guaranteed prize for every reader," gushed *The Sun* headline yesterday morning. "Apologies for Brown-hunting, but this is brilliant — he's helped every one of us," was the considered view on *The Mirror's* front-page.

This is as good as it gets for any politician. Mr Brown's personal popularity can now move in only one way. But what makes matters worse, much worse, for the whole Government is that the feverish expectations created by these headlines are going to be disappointed once people open their pay-slips and penetrate the veils of deception so skilfully flourished by Mr Brown. And when people discover they have been deceived, they are apt to become angry.

A portent of future trouble could be seen in Parliament yesterday, when the Prime Minister was trapped by Mr Hague into uttering a straightforward untruth he will live to regret. "How much has the Government raised taxes in its first three Budgets?" Mr Hague repeatedly demanded. "We have not raised taxes, we have cut them," Tony Blair insisted again and again. Yet this was simply false. As shown unambiguously in the Government's own Budget statement, taxes have risen in each of the past two years and will rise even more in the next financial year. In 1999-2000 the total tax increase will be £3.3 billion in cash terms or £2.6 billion once the automatic increases resulting from inflation are taken into account. In later years, the tax burden will rise even more sharply if Mr Brown sticks to the plans he has just outlined. The increase, in relation to an indexed base, will be £3.6 billion in 2000-01 and £4.1 billion in 2001-02. This last tax increase will be roughly equivalent to raising the standard rate of income tax by two

incurably, even after inflation is taken into account. But even on this Pickwickian definition of what constitutes a tax reduction, Mr Blair was being economical with the truth. He failed to point out that a small reduction in taxes as a share of GDP expected this year by the Treasury — from 37.2 per cent of GDP in 1998-99 to 36.6 per cent in 1999-2000 — is nothing more than a temporary blip, due to the economic slowdown. From April 2000 onwards, the Treasury's plans call for the tax burden, even expressed as a share of GDP, to resume its steady ascent. By the end of the present Parliament, the Treasury's own charts show the tax burden rising to a level not seen in this country since Nigel Lawson's tax cuts changed the course of fiscal history in 1988.

The reason for laying out all these figures is not to attack the logic of Mr Brown's view that the British people must slowly but surely be persuaded to pay more tax. Person-

The Chancellor should be honest about his tax rises, or pay the price

pence in the pound. How, then, could the Prime Minister get away with claiming that his Government was cutting taxes? And why did Mr Brown inspire such enthusiasm in the popular press?

Apart from sheer gullibility, there is another easy answer: "lies, damned lies and statistics". Figures can always be found to justify any statement, including even the claim that Mr Brown has been a tax-cutting Chancellor. For example, he could simply assert that he had cut taxes by £5.1 billion (over three years) in Tuesday's Budget, while failing to mention that this "reduction" would not even offset half of the £11.9 billion of tax increases already legislated or planned. An alternative obfuscation, attempted in Parliament yesterday by Mr Blair, is to claim that the tax burden will fall in relation to gross domestic product. This is, of course, quite consistent with taxes rising

inevitably, even after inflation is taken into account. But even on this Pickwickian definition of what constitutes a tax reduction, Mr Blair was being economical with the truth. He failed to point out that a small reduction in taxes as a share of GDP expected this year by the Treasury — from 37.2 per cent of GDP in 1998-99 to 36.6 per cent in 1999-2000 — is nothing more than a temporary blip, due to the economic slowdown. From April 2000 onwards, the Treasury's plans call for the tax burden, even expressed as a share of GDP, to resume its steady ascent. By the end of the present Parliament, the Treasury's own charts show the tax burden rising to a level not seen in this country since Nigel Lawson's tax cuts changed the course of fiscal history in 1988.

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ally, I tend to agree with the views of the Liberal Democrats on public spending: the poor state of various public services in Britain would justify a modest increase in the tax burden, provided that the Government could prove itself capable of spending the extra money efficiently and wisely on genuine public goods. I do not even object in principle to the aptly named "stealth taxes" so vehemently denounced by Mr Hague and the Tories. I think the "stealthiness" of these taxes — the £3 billion raised annually from pension funds by abolishing the obscure dividend imputation system — is economically well justified, and, in fact, I urged its introduction under the Tories. I also agree with the steady increase in energy and tobacco taxes. This has turned out to be the real mother lode in the Treasury goldmine, raising more than £5 billion a year by the end of this Parliament and promising far greater riches in the years beyond. I also support the restructuring of family support and national insurance, which will see many middle-class and skilled manual workers paying £500 extra in national insurance per year.

What I object to, however, is the pretence that all of these "stealth taxes" are completely painless and politically irrelevant, simply because they do not show up on our monthly payslips. I object to this partly out of respect for democracy and honesty, but also for less pompous reasons. In trying to deceive the public, Mr Brown risks more than discredit to his own Government. He also puts at risk the political pressures unleashed by this Budget's false promises could create exactly the outcome most abhorred by Mr Brown: a typical boom-bust cycle at the time of the next election. Mr Brown should enjoy his popularity while it lasts.

anatole.kaletsky@the-times.co.uk



Come off it, Gordon

The Chancellor should be honest about his tax rises, or pay the price



Anatole Kaletsky

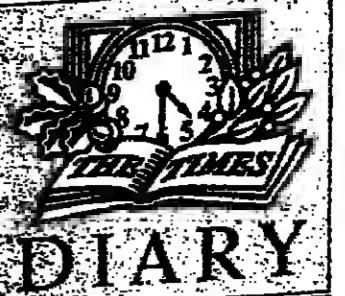
By pretending to be a tax-cutting Chancellor instead of having the courage to explain why modestly higher taxes are needed to fulfil the Government's promises, Mr Brown will be caught in a pincer movement between disillusioned voters and a disappointed public sector. On one side, *The Sun's* readers will demand genuine tax cuts once they realise that the "guaranteed prizes for every reader" announced on their newspaper's front page were little more than a conjuring trick financed by their own spending on petrol, tobacco and insurance.

On the other side, Mr Brown will face mounting pressure from public sector unions and proponents of bigger government — since he appears to have so much money to give out in tax cuts, surely he could afford to spend it on public services instead. In this respect, the most dangerous single measure in the Budget was the £640 million bounty to pensioners in the form of a Christmas bonus, payable to all. If the Treasury could afford this, it could surely afford anything.

The result of this pincer movement could be to undermine spending disciplines in the public sector at precisely the time when Mr Brown faces maximum pressure to deliver real, honest tax cuts, before the next general election. To make matters worse, public resistance to his stealth taxes could by that time have grown to the point where even the inexorable escalation of energy and tobacco taxes may no longer be politically acceptable. This tax resistance would become particularly acute if the Chancellor's luck ran out and oil prices began to rise, exposing the full extent of the Treasury's rising demands.

The combination of these political forces for higher spending and lower taxes could make it far more difficult for Mr Brown to stick to his fiscal plans than the Budget statement assumes. The consequence of any serious fiscal backsliding would, of course, be higher interest rates, higher inflation and, most probably, a stronger pound. In sum, the political pressures unleashed by this Budget's false promises could create exactly the outcome most abhorred by Mr Brown: a typical boom-bust cycle at the time of the next election. Mr Brown should enjoy his popularity while it lasts.

anatole.kaletsky@the-times.co.uk



Bank account

JUST weeks after Sir Evelyn de Rothschild split from his wife, he has been consoled by a wealthy and glamorous American friend — Lynn Forrester (right), who entertains the Clintons at her Martha's Vineyard retreat.

The banking king, 67, (left), eschewed friends by separating from his lovely wife of 25 years, Victoria, also an American. The friendly duo have been seen out recently at Le Cirque, New York.

Ms Forrester, 44, is a millionaire phone magnate who is big in New York's Democratic elite.

She was married for ten years to Andrew Stein, former city council president, with whom she had two sons. In 1993 he abandoned his bid to become New York mayor after his marriage sadly failed.



PETER MANDELSON thought he had a buyer for that house. I gather he was prepared to accept around £750,000 — £35,000 less than the asking price, but the buyer has now not returned calls for several days.

■ GOOD news for James Major — who collapsed in a nightclub earlier this week — and his silicon engined fiance, Emma Noble.

OK, that important chronicle of modern culture, is negotiating to part with £250,000 for "exclusive" photographs of their May wedding.

"The editor believes the marriage will be one of the major events of the year, and wants it whatever the cost," gushes one. The deal might allow the former PM's son to move out of his in-laws in Sidcup.

■ DESPITE a love of powerful men, Monica Lewinsky almost cancelled her rendezvous with Mohamed Al-Fayed at Harrods. Mo asked to give her a gift but his request went down badly. Piqued, he refused to introduce her to the media. His proposed pressie? A box of cigars.

■ SECRET research shows that Tony Blair's "Islington man" image is so loathsome to Scots that Blair is to replace himself with Gordon Brown as the face of the party for Scottish elections.

Focus Groups led by Philip Gould, the luvvy analyst, show that while the PM is seen as too London and Donald Dewar, the Secretary of State for Scotland, comes over as ineffectual, Brown sits Scottish hearts. He admits he "will spend a bit more time than normal" in Scotland. When my lassie rang to ask if Blair plans to journey north, No 10 hung up.

AS President Khatami of Iran was being shovelled around Rome (he has popped over to chat to the Pope and see the sights) his old friend Salman Rushdie was a pizza's throw away in Turin.



■ ALAN CLARK dined with Titus Oates, Descendant of the 17th-century anti-Catholic agitator. Oates popped over from America to sup in the Pugil Room. Father Michael Seed risked introducing Oates — whose ancestor was "the biggest villain and liar in Christendom" — to prod muncher Ann Widdecombe and Lord Longford. Clarky rather pricked the party mood by hissing: "Oates was a traitor, a foul man".

LADIES day at No 11, Cherie Blair was surprised to catch Gordon Brown surrounded by women that she smiled weakly and bolted upstairs to her flat.

■ AFTER the theatrical budget, a Tory frontbencher muttered supertatively: "God, I wouldn't be Tory leader for anything." For balance, I should add that as William Hague stuck into Gordon Brown at the dispatch box, the same shaker added: "But thank God William is."

JASPER GERARD



Nuclear spies

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THE TIMES THURSDAY MARCH 11 1999

JPL's Journals

Bank account



CHINA WORRIES

Nuclear spies, partisan politics and a troubled US strategy

Foreign policy plays a less decisive role in American presidential elections than it does in countries with far less demanding global trade and security interests. But every so often, as with the Vietnam War, broad-based disquiet about a particular policy can throw grit into the party oysters. For Bill Clinton, and even more for Al Gore whose campaign will be in 2000, it cannot be good news that the Clinton "strategic partnership" with China could be turning into just such a piece of grit.

That partnership policy had already come under fierce fire before the developments of this week. The mainstream view is still that America must handle China's growing military and economic might by treating it, in hope, as a responsible "status quo" power. But there are dozens of vociferous counter-voices, both on left and right. The emotive and divisive post-1949 debate about "who lost China?" subsided after 1979, when Deng Xiaoping's modernisation drive started to open the country up. But distrust of Beijing surged up again with the Tiananmen massacre ten years ago and the new Chinese missile build-up on the Taiwan Straits raises fears that "who lost Taiwan" could be the awkward political question of the future.

The "China question" has always had the potential to arouse Americans of all political persuasions. Democrats, and not only Democrats, are made restive by China's suppression of dissidents, repression in Tibet and the impact of its huge trade surplus with the US on American jobs. Republicans, who have long been exercised by abortion, religious persecution, copyright infringements, the suspicion that the Administration is weakening its support for Taiwan and China's part in nuclear weapons proliferation, have broadened their attack since questions surfaced in 1996 about illegal Chinese campaign contributions to the Democrat campaign coffers. Doubts in all quarters about Chinese ambitions and behaviour have been gravely exacerbated by evidence that, both legally and illegally, China has been acquiring massive quantities of militarily-sensitive American technology. This is a combustible combination. The

dismissal this week on suspicion of nuclear espionage of Wen Ho Lee, a Chinese-American weapons designer at the Los Alamos nuclear laboratory, has merely applied a match. Secrets passed by him to Beijing are believed to have enabled China to develop multiple-warhead missiles as sophisticated as Britain's Trident-2. This espionage, as the Clinton Administration emphasises, took place a decade ago, under the Bush Administration; but the Democrat White House knew about Mr Wen's activities as far back as 1996 and has come under opportunistic Republican attack for being slow to act for hiding the truth from Congress and for putting the relationship with China above other security issues.

The case is obviously serious in itself, with the damage to national security ranked by some in the CIA as greater even than that caused by the convicted spy, Aldrich Ames. But it also follows hard upon December's unanimous finding by a House of Representatives committee that US national security has been damaged by China's success in obtaining other sensitive US technology. House Republicans accuse the Administration of delay in publishing this report in declassified form.

The Senate normally veers to mainstream views on China. But its Intelligence Committee now wants to make public parts of its own inquiry into the 1996 campaign funds scandal and into US satellite sales to China. Although partisan politics is at work here — disclosure could seriously damage Al Gore — Senator Trent Lott's talk of charging Administration officials with contempt of Congress may reflect a wider change in Senate attitudes.

In truth, the US needs to worry as much about China's current weakness as its future strength, as is clear from the bleak picture given to the current session of China's People's Congress by Zhu Rongji, the Prime Minister. But when China's internal difficulties coincide with a fresh drive against dissidents and a truculent tone in foreign policy, that does not help its supporters. With patience strained in the US and pragmatism faltering in China, next month's US-China summit will be a tough test of the troubled Clinton strategy.

THE BYERS MARKET

The DTI chief cannot afford to go slow on his reforms

The political lifespans of Secretaries of State for Trade and Industry have not been impressive. A dozen figures have occupied that office since it was reconstituted 16 years ago. Not one has lasted much more than three years and Peter Mandelson served a mere five months before his enforced resignation. This instability has undoubtedly damaged the DTI within Whitehall. While this is neither a tragedy for British trade nor for industry, there are positive initiatives that the department can take to expand enterprise and competition. It is to the credit of Stephen Byers that these appear to be his objectives.

In a statement to the House of Commons yesterday Mr Byers placed his emphasis on populist new inquiries into the price of several high-profile consumer products. The prospect of the electricity industry and those responsible for the cost of compact discs being called to account will doubtless resonate with consumers. The extension of the league table culture to include the many providers of mortgages will also win plaudits. An international price comparison might also prove instructive. The most significant aspect of his announcement may be the element which, for the moment, contains the fewest details. Mr Byers has outlined his support for a sharp shift in the shape and scope of competition policy.

The Secretary of State argues that a new and independent competition agency should dominate all decisions on mergers. The political dimension of current arrangements has long been controversial. The creation of a small business service,

providing a single focus for a series of initiatives that are presently dispersed across several departments, is plainly sensible. It is also encouraging that Mr Byers has maintained his predecessor's active interest in the promotion of science.

Mr Byers would clearly like to encourage a more transparent approach to competition policy on the lines of the American model. This is a noble aim but will require further institutional reform if it is to be realised. A new independent competition authority will need to be more than simply a renamed version of the present Monopolies and Mergers Commission if it is to be effective. The OFT, as currently constituted, is unlikely to pursue its expanded mandate with vigour. Mr Byers should make these issues the central priority of his forthcoming consultation document.

There is also little point in reducing the capacity of politicians to intervene in competition decisions if they can achieve similar ends by different methods. If new institutions are to be truly independent, they should set their own agendas rather than respond to ministers' instructions. The international price comparison and other hard evidence should determine the decision to launch an investigation. This would be an accurate replication of US arrangements. It would also ensure that sections of industry did not find themselves under constant inspection. Mr Byers has displayed sound instincts which can be made concrete in substance. He has the chance to shape a policy that serves the interests of entrepreneurs and consumers.

JACK THE DRIPPER

Ways of seeing a load of new Pollocks

"Is he America's greatest living artist?" asked *Time* magazine in 1949. A key New York critic had recently hailed a brooding, puzzled-looking, painter as the most important artist of the age. But many, this landmark article explained, still believed that Jackson Pollock, the man in question, made "nothing more than interesting if inexplicable decoration". Still others condemned his paintings as degenerate — "as unpalatable as yesterday's macaroni".

Pollock may be dead now, thrown from a car and slammed headlong into a tree at the age of 44. He habitually drove drunk, as if tempting the demons which had taunted him throughout his life to take their final toll. But critical confusion about his stature has long since been cleared up. Pollock is hailed as a founding father of Abstract Expressionism. His legend hangs around him, like a cloud. The wild, personality of this disorderly, live-hard-dying young alcoholic American is marketed as part of his work. And as a major Pollock retrospective opens at the Tate, London, may congratulate itself for the second time this year. Once again, the capital becomes the only European venue for a most significant show.

Yet visitors flocking to see the work would do well to remember the doubts of

that *Time* article published 50 years ago. A generation of critics have sealed up a reputation with red tape. Only uncertainty will return it fresh, as alive and enigmatic as it was meant to be. Spontaneity was the essence of Pollock's raw, sprawling style, of the paint splashed straight from the psyche of a rebellious boho. The canvas was less a construction than an arena of action. What unfurled on the long bolts of cotton rolled out across his Long Island studio was less a portrayal of intention than an improvisation, a dazzling record of some spur of the moment dance. The Tate judiciously installs a video of Pollock in his rotunda so that visitors may watch the artist at work, swinging, pouring, spattering, dripping. It is an important reminder of how his work became what it is.

There will still be visitors who see nothing but macaroni. "Apocalyptic wallpaper" was one well recorded put down. Others will be surprised by the squiggles and splatters, awed by the energy, or confounded by a scary sense of void. It does not much matter. Instinct is more important than intellect in this show. Pollock himself said: "Don't look for anything. React". And that is what thousands of visitors, in positive and negative ways, are about to do.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Budget's critics voice their dissent

From Mrs Fiona Saunderson

Sir, Under which definition has the "family" benefited from the Chancellor's Budget (reports and details, March 10)? If family includes in its meaning an employed husband/father, an unemployed wife/mother, who acts (by choice) as principal carer for a child/children, then the Government has sent a clear and family message.

Gordon Brown is scrapping the married couple's allowance in April 2000 and a further 12 months will elapse before the launch of the children's tax credit. Further, the Chancellor has structured the proposed credit in such a way that it clearly discriminates against a family where only one parent earns. Under his scheme two parents can earn £30,000 apiece and claim the children's tax credit, whereas only one in the household earning more than £38,500 loses the right.

Tony Blair and his Government need to state clearly what they define as family.

Yours faithfully,
TONY HOLLAND,
5 Thornhill Square, N1 1BQ.
acholland@portables.ngfl.gov.uk
March 10.

From Mr Trevor Kermish

Sir, As a non-smoking, enterprising, hard-working, self-employed, property-owning family man my disposable income will fall following Gordon Brown's Budget.

I should like to know what I am doing wrong and in an effort to redress this situation would be interested to know where I can purchase a reliable, practical car big enough for my family and business but with an engine of less than 1100cc.

Yours,
TREVOR KEMISH,
17 Whitebeam Road,
Hedge End, Southampton SO30 0PY.
March 10.

From Mr Peter White

Sir, I find Gordon Brown's 6p rise in the price of diesel fuel both disappointing and perplexing.

I have just exchanged a small petrol car for a small diesel car and have thereby almost exactly doubled the miles I can achieve with one gallon of fuel. It would seem to me, therefore, that diesel emissions would have to be 100 per cent more polluting than those of petrol to justify Mr Brown's actions, as I burn half the amount of fuel to travel the same distance. Even the gloomiest scientific reports do not suggest that this is the case, indeed it is my understanding that a well-tuned diesel engine is less damaging to the atmosphere than a petrol engine. In the rest of Europe diesel remains a cheaper option than petrol.

Mr Brown wants us to use public transport: nearly all buses and taxis run on diesel.

Yours faithfully,
PETER WHITE,
Southview,
Upper Guildown Road,
Guildford, Surrey GU2 5EZ.
March 10.

From Mr D. J. Brock

Sir, The usual oversimplification and claims by Mr and Mrs Average to be a pound or two better off. In fact, as happens every time, road fuel goes up so everything goes up.

Yours faithfully,
D. J. BROCK,
76 Buchanan Road,
Rugby, Warwickshire CV22 6AZ.
March 10.

From Mr Jeremy J. H. Westwood

Sir, The real losers from yesterday's Budget are those who live and work in the country. We already suffer from the Government's ridiculous ban on the bone ban and other factors, and now face a huge rise in fuel costs, with no other means of transport available. Does anyone care?

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY J. H. WESTWOOD,
Mire House,
Cautley, Cumbria LA10 5LY.
jeremy1943@aol.com
March 10.

From Mr David Lindsay

Sir, I could not believe my eyes when reading in the Chancellor's speech that the levy on business use of energy is to be offset by a reduction in employers' national insurance contributions.

Apart from the fact that there is no obvious connection between payroll size and energy use, such raiding of the national insurance fund, when there are so many legitimate claims on it, is shameless.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID LINDSAY,
36 Orchard Coombe,
Whitchurch Hill, Reading RG8 7QL.
March 10.

From Mr Peter A. Rushforth

Sir, The Chancellor has increased cigarettes by 17p. Is the Government planning to reintroduce the 1p coin?

Yours truly,
P. A. RUSHFORTH,
36 Sutton Drive,
Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5BQ.
March 10.

Does every teacher need a laptop?

From Mr Tony Holland

Though I have spent much time on the Net I fail to see much use for it in the classroom. Having one computer on the Net has been useful for demonstration purposes, e-mail, downloaded sites for the pupils' later reference and teachers' research. I believe books and materials come higher in our priorities than machine-reliant technology such as the literacy hour.

The children have also benefited and all ages and abilities in my class (seven to eleven-year-olds) use the e-mail facility and website with confidence. They have also created a website and are continually working to improve it.

In spite of this I would much rather have had the money instead of the computer, digital camera, printer and a year's access to the Internet, to replace the 5 per cent budget cut I suffered last year — in real terms £4,000 which, coincidentally, is what my computer and all the equipment cost.

Yours faithfully,
FRANCIS CHARTERS,
c/o 11 Eastnor Grove,
Leamington Spa,
Warwickshire CV31 1LD.
March 6.

From Mr Gary Longman

Sir, The government scheme to provide all teachers with a laptop costing £1,000 will cost nearly £60,000 in my school. The news comes at the end of a week when I was informed that, under the Government's "fair funding" policy, my school budget has been cut by £90,000 for next year.

Perhaps the Government would be better considering the question: is it better to give every teacher a laptop, or have every teacher standing in front of a class of the smallest possible size?

Yours faithfully,
GARY LONGMAN
(Secondary school head teacher),
The Ridings, Station Road, Barnack,
Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 3DW.
g.longman@globalnet.co.uk
March 8.

From Mr Francis Charters

Sir, I am a computer teacher in a specialist needs unit. The Fund for Learning offered one of our units over £1,000 to get on the Internet. But since putting in the bid to the fund over six months ago, I have put another centre on the Internet, at the cost of £50 for a modem.

Providing each teacher with a laptop for home use may have merit, but what are my son's teachers going to do with them — record continuing failure on spreadsheets and charts?

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL BARRATT,
11 Tussoc Close,
Crawley, Sussex RH11 3EE.
m.barratt@btconnect.com
March 10.

Euro elections

From Mr Robert Moreland

Sir, Dr David Butler and Mr Peter Snow call (letter, March 6) for two administrative changes to the conduct of the counting for the June European elections.

Behind their complaints lies the fact that the European elections, despite the enormous complexity of the new proportional representation system, will still depend on the old-fashioned manual counting of bits of paper by a vast number of local government staff.

Surely the time has come to move to electronic counting, which has the virtue of being quicker, simpler, cheaper and more accurate?

Yours etc,
ROBERT MORELAND,
3 The Firs,
Heathville Road,
Gloucester GL1 3EW.
r.moreland@virgin.net
March 8.

Where now brown cow?

From Dr Richard Aspin

Sir, Professor Stock (letter, March 5) stakes a rival claim for ownership of the real hide of Jenner's cow for St George's Hospital Medical School, in competition with Gloucester Folk Museum (letter, March 3), and speculates that Jenner had perhaps more than one animal. This reminds me of the craze for relics in the Middle Ages, when the number of purported fragments of the True Cross would have been enough to populate a forest.

It is surely much more likely that neither hide is genuine. The beatification of Jenner was an early development, and relic-hunters were soon at work, with all the associated fallout such as forged autographs.

Many of the relics, genuine and bogus, fetched up in the collections of my own institution. It might be appropriate for all such saints' relics to carry a government health warning.

Yours faithfully,

RICHARD ASPIN
(Curator of Western Manuscripts),
Wellcome Institute for the
History of Medicine,
The Wellcome Trust,
183 Euston Road, NW1 2BE.
r.aspin@wellcome.ac.uk
March 5.

From Professor Nicola LeFanu

Sir, Jenner's cow is not biologating. In his Jenner bibliography (1985) my late father William LeFanu writes: "The cow's hide was given by his son Col. Robert Jenner to St George's Hospital Medical School; the hide of another cow, which also provided cowpox virus, was for many years in the chemist's shop of Anderson and Virgo in Worcester."

Yours faithfully,
NICOLA LEFANU,
Rationalist Press Association,
88 Islington High Street, N1 8EW.

English as spoken on her estuaries

From Mr Edward Grayson

Sir, Penny Wark's endorsement of Beryl Bainbridge's condemnation of regional accents (article "Why Beryl speaks for the nation", March 4) has a precedent from equally authoritative sources, the immortal C. B. Fry, and Lord Birkenhead.

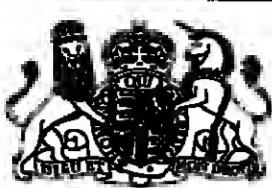
In Fry's *Life Worth Living*, published in 1939, he recalled the vintage years at Wadham, Oxford, in the early 1890s, with F. E. Smith, John Simon and others destined for high office, and particularly the unashamed ambition of "F. E." before receiving his peerage title taken from his native Birkenhead upon appointment as Lord Chancellor.

Fry emphasised how, when they came up together in 1892, F. E. had a marked Lancashire accent, which soon disappeared. When I enjoyed the fruits of friendship with Fry during the early 1950s when I was persuading him to contribute a generous foreword to *Corinthians and Cricketers*, I queried tentatively whether this was a possible exaggeration, distilled by the mists of time.

Unhesitatingly the reply was: "It was an accent as broad as Gracie Fields'. As soon as he got rid of it I realised he intended to do something with his life."

I am sir.

Yours faithfully,



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 10: Her Excellency Madame Mariana Hinsa was received in audience this morning by The Queen and presented the Letters of Recall of her predecessor and her own Letters of Credence as Ambassador of Niger to the Court of St James's.

Mr John Shepherd (Deputy Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office) was present.

The Archbishop of Canterbury was received in audience by The Queen.

The Queen held a Council at 12.30pm.

There were present: The Right Honourable Margaret Beckett (President), The Right Honourable Lord Carter (Captain, Gentleman-at-Arms), The Right Honourable Lord Hardie (Lord Advocate) and the Right Honourable Jack Cunningham (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster).

The Baroness Hollis of Heigham, Miss Hilary Armstrong, MP, Mr Richard Caborn, MP, and Mr Ian McCartney, MP, were sworn in as Members of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council.

Mr Alex Galloway was in attendance as Clerk of the Council.

The King of Swaziland and Her Royal Highness Inkhosi太后 visited The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh this afternoon and remained to lunch.

The following were invited:

Prince Muzigama, Princess Lomangano, Councillor T.V. Muthenwa (Chief of Zambabwe Area and Senior Governor to Royal Household), the Hon A.M.H. Shabangu (Minister, Foreign Affairs and Trade), His Excellency the Rev Percy S. Mungomezzi (High Commissioner for Swaziland), Sir John Kerr and Mr John Duley.

A Guard of Honour, found by the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards, was mounted in the Quadrangle.

The Major General Commanding Household Division and the Field Officers in Brigade Waiting were present.

The Right Honourable Tony Blair, MP (Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury) had an Audience of The Queen this evening.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

March 10: The Duke of Edinburgh, Founder and Chairman of the International Trustees of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award International Association, this after-

noon departed RAF Northolt for Belgium.

His Royal Highness this evening attended a Dinner for the Benelux Award in Antwerp, Belgium.

Brigadier Miles Hunt-Davis is in attendance.

ST JAMES'S PALACE

March 10: This morning The Prince of Wales opened a new branch of Lloyds Bank in Buenos Aires.

His Royal Highness later visited the Buenas Ondas Organic Farming Project for street children.

This afternoon His Royal Highness visited the Siderar Steel Plant and inaugurated a joint UK-Argentinian material handling and equipment factory.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

March 10: The Duke of York gave a reception for Understanding Industry at St James's Palace.

March 10: Today is the Anniversary of the Birth of The Prince Edward.

His Royal Highness, Trustee of Edinburgh's Award International Foundation, this afternoon attended a Gold Award Ceremony followed by a Reception for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Young Canadians Challenge, in the Hotel Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

March 10: The Princess Royal this morning arrived at Kyoto Station, Japan, and was received by Her Majesty's Consul-General, Osaka (Mr Rodney Cumming).

Her Royal Highness attended a lunch with Non Governmental Organisation representatives at Doh, Kyoto.

The Princess Royal this afternoon visited Warashibe-en, Institute for the Disabled, Hirakata City.

Her Royal Highness, President, Save the Children this evening attended a Reception and Dinner at the Imperial Hotel, Osaka.

KENSINGTON PALACE

March 10: The Duke of Gloucester this afternoon visited Kent and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant (The Lord Kingsdown, KG).

His Royal Highness, Commissioner, English Heritage, this afternoon visited Bradbourne House, East Malling, Kent.

The Duke of Gloucester, as Grand Prior, The Order of St John, afterwards opened the new St John Ambulance County Headquarters and Training Centre, West Malling, Kent.

Luncheons

Lord Mayor

The Lord Mayor gave a luncheon yesterday at the Mansion House for Members of Parliament for London constituencies. Among those present were:

The Hon Peter Brooke, CH, MP, Mr Eric Forth, MP, Mr Mike Gapes, MP, Ms Joanne Ryan, MP, Mr Richard Ottaway, MP, Mr Paul Boateng, MP, Mr Alan Beith, MP, Mr Nigel Beard, MP, Ms Judith Charnley, MP, Mr Harry Cohen, MP, Mr Iain Duncan-Smith, MP, Mr Michael Ellis, MP, Mr David Eustace, MP, Ms Joanne Lockett, MP, Mr Ken Livingstone, MP, and Ms Linda Popham, MP.

Lady Mayors

The Lady Mayors gave a luncheon at the Mansion House yesterday for the City's livery companies concerned with the equestrian world. Mr Richard Page, MP, Mr Michael Mates, MP, and representatives of the Saddlers', Blacksmiths', Farriers', Loriners' and Farmers' Companies were among the guests.

Academy of Experts

Mr Michael Cohen, outgoing Chairman of The Academy of Experts, was the host at a luncheon held yesterday at the RAF Club to mark the change in officers. Lord Howe of Aberavon, CH, QC, Sir Donald Harrison, Her Honour John Graham Hall, Mr Richard Freeman (chairman elect) and Miss Marion Simmons, QC, were among the guests.

United Grand Lodge of England

Lord Farnham, Pro Grand Master, presided at the Quarterly Communication of the United Grand Lodge of England held yesterday at Freemasons' Hall.

University news

Emmanuel College, Cambridge Elected into Honorary Fellowships with effect from February 15, 1999:

Peter Michael Beckwith, MA, Jagganath Nath Dhamija, MA.

Church in Wales

Diocese of Swansea and Brecon The Rev Annette Francis, Curate of Blaenau Ffestiniog, to be Rector of Llanelli.

The Rev Dr Ishwary Davies, Vicar of Pontycysylte, Llangynidr, St Davids diocese, to be Rector of Ystradgynlais, Swansea and Brecon diocese.

BIRTHS

Mr Donald Adams, author, 47; Mr Terence Alexander, author, 76; Miss Agatha Barbara, former president, Malta, 76; Sir John Batten, former Physician to The Queen, 75; Mr K.L. Bedell-Pearce, director, Prudential Corporation, 53; Professor A.O. Bents, former Principal, Royal Veterinary College, 72; Dr John Beynon, former Principal, King's College, London, 60; Miss Louise Brough, tennis player, 76; Lord Congleton, 69; Sir Kenneth Dover, former President, Corpus Christi College, Oxford, 79; Mr Dennis Enright, writer, 79; Mr Peter Eyre, actor, 57; Mr Michael Flesch, QC, 59; Mr David Gentleman, painter and designer, 69; Mr Jonathan Gestner, director, Marlowe Ram Books, 59; Professor T.C. Gray, former Vice-Chancellor, 85; Lord Lawrence of Blaenau Ffestiniog, 76; Sir Henry Martin, former chairman, British Tourist Authority, 78; Mr Timothy Mason, director, Museums and Galleries Commission, 54; Vice-Admiral Sir Christopher Morgan, 60; Air Marshal Sir Alec Morris, 73; Lord Mowbray and Stourton, 76; Mr Rupert Murdoch, chairman and

chief executive, The News Corporation, 68; Miss Erica O'Donnell, founder, Study Centre for the History of the Fine and Decorative Arts, 79; Lord Justice Pill, 61; Mrs Jennifer Smith, former Principal, Harrogate Ladies College, 49; Mr Richard Smith, editor, *British Medical Journal*, 47; Sir Keith Speed, MP, director, Newbridge Partnership, 65; Sir Ian Ternant, 71; former Lord-Lieutenant of Morayshire, 80; Miss Patricia Tindale, architect, 73; Mr Ron Todd, trade unionist, 72; Sir Peter Walker, chairman, SmithKline Beecham, 68; Mr J. Whybrow, chief executive, Philips Holding, 52; Lord Wilberforce, 92; Mr Alan Yentob, director of television, BBC Broadcast, 52.

DEATHS

Mr ASHBOY - Oliver William died on Saturday, 6th March, a brother for Phoebe, and our first son, dad's doing well, and so is his wife Judy and Phoebe Ashboy.

BURTON - On March 6th, at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, to Anne-Louise (née Reilly) and David a son, Dan Thomas.

GAPPI - On February 28th, 1999, to Katie (née Bayless) and Graham, a beautiful daughter, Anna Grace.

GOVET - On 6th March 1999, at the Royal Free Hospital, Hampstead to Angela (née D'Arcy) and David, a son, a brother for Stephanie.

GILDAY - On March 6th, to Siobhan (née Simpson-Nairn) and Ian, a daughter, Emily Corrilia Clare, a sister, Patrick and Daniel.

GLES - On February 27th, in Eastbourne, to Caroline and Nicholas, a daughter, Charlotte Annabel Carmel, a sister for Philippa and James.

GODGE - On March 5th at The Portland Hospital, to Evelyn (née Visconti) and Peter, a daughter, Olivia Daisy, a sister for Angela Rose.

HEYER - On March 7th at The Portland Hospital, to Peter (née Gregerson) and Christian, a daughter, Natasha Sophia.

LYNCH - On March 7th at The Portland Hospital, to Jacqueline (née O'Dowd) and Peter, a son, Joseph Patrick.

BIRTHS

Ms MAY - On March 6th at The Portland Hospital, to Harry and Emily O'Neill and their daughter, Olivia, a sister for Colin.

MONTHERLANT - On March 6th, at the Portland Hospital, to Marc and Miguel, a son, Mateo, a brother for Miguel.

RAMSAY - On February 28th, to McDonald and Jamie, in Victoria, Canada, a son, George Arthur Erskine.

SIMON - On Saturday, 5th March 4th, at Queen Charlotte's Hospital, to Melinda and Jasper, a beloved daughter, Anna.

SPRATT - On March 6th, to Frances (née Reches) and Peter, a son, Alpergan "Aly" Edmund.

WARNER - To Tariq and Sophie, a son, a boy, Peter Glynn Alexander, on Wednesday 3rd March 1999 at 2:13 am 7:30 in Los Angeles, California.

WYATT - On February 27th at St Mary's Paddington, to Fiona (née Pearson) and John, a daughter, India Rose.

DEATHS

Mr BOOTH - Gwendoline, passed away on Monday 8th March, mother of Elizabeth and William.

COATES - Travers (Toby), suddenly on Tuesday 9th March in his 82nd year. Much loved husband of Jean, father of three children, Anne and Del (Canada), Peter and Catherine (Jamaica), Peter and Marcelline (Colombia). Also survived by son, James (2), Esther (Hawaii); grandchildren, David, Alison, Nadiya, Peeta, Jo, Nara and Sophie. Also survived by son Thomas (1975).

Also survived by his nine siblings and their families; in-laws; and countless other friends, colleagues and neighbours.

Services 11 am at St Mary's RC Church, Aspley Hill, Woburn Sands, followed by private cremation.

Flowers to John Burgeot, 4 Nos, Westgate Road or donations to St Oswald's Hospice, Croydon, Surrey.

Family flowers only. Donations to St Peter's Church, Westgate Road or All Saints Church, West Avenue, Newcastle NE3 4ES.

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Cardinal's offer on abortion

THE TIMES THURSDAY MARCH 11 1999
OBITUARIES

Carmen Gronau, former head of the Old Master Pictures Department at Sotheby's, died on February 15 aged 88. She was born on October 8, 1910 at Freiburg im Breisgau.

Carmen Gronau was passionate about good paintings, and had the great gift of spotting the quality of a picture, the degree of its importance and hence its potential value on the market. In the postwar art market, as head of Old Master pictures at Sotheby's, she helped the auction house to rival Christie's in her field for the first time, and to increase the excitement and the value of the entire market.

Gronau was short and severe-looking, with dark wavy hair and piercing brown eyes behind heavy glasses. She could be heard from a considerable distance talking fluently and emphatically in English, German, French or Italian, and her restless energy and natural authority combined to make sure that her presence could not be ignored. But she also had a great sense of humour and was a most loyal and generous friend.

Carmen Ida Joachim von Wogau was brought up at Lilleholz, a wine-growing estate overlooking the Rhine near Frei-

burg. Her father, Max von Wogau, was a Volga German who had inherited large business interests in Russia, but he lost them during the Revolution and his fortune was severely depleted. He married Carmen Devaux, who came from a prominent Anglo-French family, and their daughter Carmen was treated just like her two brothers: educated at the local university.

She showed a great aptitude for art history and moved on to Göttingen, where she studied under Nikolaus Pevsner. From there she went to Florence to pursue her research on the Florentine artist Il Cigoli. In 1933 she fell in love with Hans Gronau, son of the eminent art historian George Gronau, the former director of the Kassel Art Gallery, who had by then retired and was living in Florence.

Once married, the couple settled briefly in Freiburg, where their elder son was born, but then Carmen went out of curiosity to hear Hitler speak at a local rally. She was so appalled that she persuaded her husband (who was half Jewish) that they must move to England immediately. Her English cousins helped them to settle in, and work was found for her husband as an adviser to art dealers.

CARMEN GRONAU



When war came, he was interned on the Isle of Man, but he was then released and joined the Pioneer Corps. To escape from the Blitz meanwhile, Carmen took their two sons, to Bedfay Manor in Oxfordshire, which they shared with Basil Fielding's family.

After the war, Hans Gronau was recommended to Sotheby's as a picture cataloguer, to replace Tancer Esterinus, who by this time was not at all reliable on attributions and had become too grand to do the work of cataloguing. Sotheby's, which had begun as a book auction house, had never been much known for its picture sales — the more aristocratic Christie's was then the place for Old Master paintings, and even in the 1930s the contents of country houses would routinely be divided between the two — but the

board was determined to change this.

In the early 1950s Hans Gronau became ill with a congenital heart condition and was told that he should not lift paintings or go up and down stairs, so his wife went in to Sotheby's to do the donkey work. As his condition worsened, she gradually took over the cataloguing, and when he died in 1951 the directors asked her to stay on. She was herself to become a

director in 1958 — at that time a highly unusual appointment for a woman.

Her intelligence and flair were especially noticed by Peter Wilson, the most ambitious of the younger directors, who had become Chairman of Sotheby's in 1957. As a team, the two were formidable. Wilson had a brilliant eye for objects (though not so much for pictures), a taste

for deal-making and colossal charm. Gronau brought a great knowledge of pictures, a cataloguer's training, language skills and very good European connections. Both had plenty of courage, and though inclined to prima donnaish behaviour, they were always attentive to other people's expertise and keen to promote the younger members of the firm as specialists.

The story of the rise and rise of Sotheby's under Peter Wilson is well charted. Gronau was closely involved, and thrived on the challenge. She ran the department of Old Master pictures (which then included Old Master drawings) with a certain strictness, but she was just as firm with clients as with her own staff. If people were nuisance or the picture was poor, she was brusque; if she liked the picture, then a doubling or recalcitrant vendor would be won over by equal measures of pressure and charm.

The 1960s and very early 1970s were perhaps the most exciting time to be working at Sotheby's, but the rapid growth of the firm meant new preoccupations and new alliances, which loosened the Wilson-Gronau link. After a serious illness Gronau was persuaded, against her wishes, to step aside from running the department. She moved her base to

Florence, where she had opened a Sotheby's office some years previously, following the spectacular success of Prince Paul of Yugoslavia's house sale at Pratolino.

Though she still travelled frequently, it was now from her office in the Palazzo Capponi and her villa at San Domenico. This stunning property, bought in the 1930s by her father-in-law, gave a perfect, uninterrupted view over Florence, and the *podere*, falling steeply away from the terrace down to the Via Farentina, was quite magical. The house was full of interesting and diverse visitors, for she loved entertaining. Though fond of Harold Acton and John Pope-Hennessy, she was never entirely at ease in the Anglo-Florentine circle, but she welcomed visiting academics, collectors, art dealers, anybody from Sotheby's and, of course, her own relatives and her children's friends.

After the early loss of her husband, she faced further tragedy, with both of her sons, Peter and Philip, dying in their mid forties of the same heart disease. She was naturally deeply affected by this, though she took consolation from the affection of her five grandchildren. One of them, Amanda, moved to Italy after Philip's death, and looked after her devotedly.

COMMODORE WILLIAM WARWICK



The Cunard liner Queen Elizabeth 2, Warwick in command, is escorted into New York Harbour on May 8, 1969

Commodore William Warwick, CBE, RD, Master of the Cunard liner Queen Elizabeth 2, 1966-72, died on February 27 aged 86. He was born on November 12, 1912.

THE first Master of the liner *Queen Elizabeth 2*, the 1960s state-of-the-art successor to the Cunard "Queens" of the pre-war era — *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth* — William Warwick was nevertheless a master mariner of the old school. A burly figure with full naval "set" of beard and moustache, he epitomised the seadog of yore, and was trusted throughout the merchant marine for his seamanship and his unflappable temperament.

The *QE2*, as she soon became known, was considerably smaller than her famous predecessors. The three-stack *Queen Mary*, launched in 1934, one-time holder of the Atlantic Blue Riband, was 101,097 feet long and of 81,000 tons gross tonnage. The two-stack *Queen Elizabeth*, 1,031 feet and 83,000 tons, launched in 1938, was the largest passenger ship ever built. Yet at only

963 feet long and 65,000 tons, the *QE2* could accommodate virtually the same number of passengers as the earlier Queens.

Warwick, whose nickname "Bill" was always spelt with one "I" on his insistence, had been named Master of the *QE2* in 1966 while she was still under construction on the Clyde. Following an old (and sound) tradition, he "stood by" his ship as she neared completion at the John Brown shipyard, inspecting developments at every stage. "My intention is that nobody will know the ship better than I do," he said at the time.

But even his knowledgeable surveillance could not prevent the problems with the ship's engines which delayed her maiden voyage for four months. A December 1968 pre-maiden cruise with 500 guinea pig passengers aboard was cut short when the ship developed turbine blade trouble and had to limp back from the Canary Islands to Southampton at low speed. Cunard then refused to accept the liner without conducting vigorous sea trials of her own.

It was not until April 1969 that the problems had been ironed out and Warwick was able to take her to sea on an eight-day proving voyage to the tropics and back. Only at the end of that high-speed cruise, during which the engines had sustained the *QE2* at speeds of 32 knots for periods of six hours on end, did Cunard's chairman, Sir Basil Smallpeice, protest him silent with his new

compliment as he neared completion at the John Brown shipyard, inspecting developments at every stage. "My intention is that nobody will know the ship better than I do," he said at the time.

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ered on the Manhattan and New Jersey shores. Mayor Lindsay went aboard the ship from a coastguard cutter and finished the voyage in her.

William Eldon Warwick was born in Birkenhead, the son of an architect. He was educated at Birkenhead from where he went to the merchant navy training ship Conway. He joined the Merchant Service in 1928 and for the next few years served in the Indian Ocean and Red Sea.

Warwick was then able to get down to the serious business of commercial sailing: *QE2* made her maiden voyage proper, a cruise to Las Palmas, Tenerife and Lisbon, in the second half of April. Her maiden Atlantic crossing took place the following month, *QE2* making the passage from Le Havre to the Ambrose Light, New York Bay, in 4 days 16 hours and 39 minutes. Her reception in New York Harbour was a spectacular affair. A fleet of more than fifty small boats escorted her up the fairway, tugs whistled, half a dozen fireboats sprayed honophoric fountains and a crowd of sightseers gathered on the Manhattan and New Jersey shores. Mayor Lindsay went aboard the ship from a coastguard cutter and finished the voyage in her.

Warwick was mentioned in dispatches in 1946.

Returning to Cunard after demobilisation as a lieutenant-commander, in the early 1950s Warwick had his first command: that of the cargo ship *Alsatia*. His first passenger vessel command was *Cuthbert* in 1958. He went on to command almost every passenger liner in the Cunard fleet including *Media*, *Ivernia*, *Caronia*, *Francia* and *Muratania*. He was also staff captain and relief Master of the *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth*. During his three years' sea service as Master of *QE2* he welcomed royalty, world leaders and famous names from the worlds of showbusiness and industry to join him at his captain's table. In 1970 he was promoted Commodore, retiring from Cunard in 1975. He had been promoted Captain, RNR, in 1960, five years before he retired from the Reserve.

When war broke out in 1939 he was mobilised for service in the Royal Navy. His next six years were ones of active sea duty. In the early part of the war he served in coastal forces in the Channel and thereafter in convoys on escort duties on North Atlantic convoys and on the Murmansk route. Later he took part in operations to support the Normandy Landings.

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Warwick was expected in Southampton next month to join his son in the *QE2* for a special anniversary transatlantic crossing to commemorate the 30 years she has been plying between Southampton and New York.

William Warwick is survived by his wife Evelyn, and by three sons.

He worked for a short period for ICI before



Professor Andrew Keller, FRS, polymer scientist, died on February 7 aged 73. He was born on August 22, 1925.

PLASTICS such as polyethylene may seem mundane to most people, but Andrew Keller and his colleagues found an astonishing beauty at their heart. To him, these everyday materials were undiscovered realms which demanded an entirely new understanding and way of picturing their make-up. In opening up this world, he created a new visual branch of physics, concerned with polymer microstructures. He was a scientist not driven by mathematics or equations, but inspired by pictures, diagrams and shapes.

Born Andrew Keller in Budapest, he left Hungary in 1948 before finishing his doctorate for a special anniversary transatlantic crossing to commemorate the 30 years she has been plying between Southampton and New York.

William Warwick is survived by his wife Evelyn, and by three sons.

joining the physics department in Bristol, where he set about unravelling the mysterious way in which long chain folded manner, in a fashion similar to a string of Chinese firecrackers. This simple but crucial discovery now underpins a large branch of polymer science and technology. So absorbed was he in his subject that when driving to conferences he turned to his passenger and forgot all about the road.

His unconventional, non-mathematical style was reflected in his presentation of research, and his Hungarian-flavoured English ensured that his lectures were always memorable. He was appointed research professor in polymer science at Bristol in 1969.

He received many scientific awards, and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1972. His interests ranged from the microstructure of polymers to the thermodynamics of phase transitions.

His wife Eva died in 1997; he is survived by a son and a daughter.

PROFESSOR ANDREW KELLER

Professor Andrew Keller, FRSc, polymer scientist, died on February 7 aged 73. He was born on August 22, 1925.

The *QE2* was proud of his connection with the *QE2*: "People simply marvelled at her wherever she went," he recalled. And he was particularly proud of the day in 1990 when his second son Ronald was also appointed master of the ship, a command he held with distinction for five years.

Warwick was a natural leader, a commanding officer who had an instinctive feel for the needs of his crew. He was a good sailor, a good leader, and a good captain. He was a natural leader, a commanding officer who had an instinctive feel for the needs of his crew. He was a good sailor, a good leader, and a good captain.

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occurred here at 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon, when the Paris club train arrived from London, among the passengers being the Duchess of Edinburgh and suite and Lady Rothschild. The *Petrel*, one of the small steamers, was to perform the journey to Calais. The passengers proceeded on board, but on her Royal Highness offering, it is stated, some objection to a small boat it was decided to replace the *Petrel* by the *Victoria*. The passengers therefore came ashore again.

In the meantime the gale was increasing, and the greatest possible difficulty was experienced in getting the vessel alongside the landing, no less than two hours being taken in performing this task. The Duchess decided not to cross in such a fearful storm, and proceeded to the Lord Warden Hotel, some 30 or 40 of the passengers doing the same. Ultimately the *Victoria* left, with only 20 passengers. At a quarter past 5 the *Calais-Dover* came in sight of the pier, and the violence of wind and sea made it gather when it was that not until 8 o'clock could she be moored. Those who assisted to get her alongside stated that they had seen such a fearful hurricane. Rose after rose was broken in the attempt to get her alongside the landing stage, notwithstanding it was on the lee side of the pier, and it was feared once or twice that she must be driven ashore ...

earliest train reaching Dover from London this morning arrived about 11 o'clock, being two hours late. It was reported that in some of the cuttings, notably near Shepherd's Well, the drifts through which the trains had to pass were 15 ft high. Some serious damage had been done to the fruit orchards, branches of trees being blown away in all directions.

The most exciting experience of all, however, were in the neighbourhood of the harbour and the Admiralty pier, where some few persons ventured to brave the night through in watching the disastrous effects of the storm, the sea frequently submerging the Admiralty pier. A series of exciting incidents

GREAT GALE AND SNOWSTORM

Our Dover Correspondent telegraphed last night:

"One of the most violent hurricanes ever experienced in the Channel occurred during Monday night and this morning. The strength of the wind gradually increased until between 6 and 7 o'clock, when it was blowing with terrific force, and a blizzard set in and continued beyond midnight. The streets at Dover presented a desolate appearance, and the snow completely blocked up the windows of buildings exposed to the drift. So fierce was the wind on the sea front that it was next to impossible to walk against it. For hours together every place was enveloped in a thick veil of sharp frozen particles of ice and snow, which beat into people's faces like so many pins. The snow in many places in the town was two or three feet deep."

The reports from the country today are very serious. All the mail services by road have been entirely stopped, those reaching their destination arriving by train. In one village near Dover it is reported that some of the villagers had to dig themselves out of their cottages through 12 ft of snow. The trains on both lines have been greatly delayed. The

UK HOLIDAYS

AWAY, Kensington and Chelsea Ltd, 0181 580 4242, 0181 580 4243.

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THURSDAY MARCH 11 1999

NEWS

Fines for traders who overcharge

A nationwide assault on high prices was promised by the Government yesterday as part of a package to boost competition and enterprise.

The Trade Secretary is taking new powers to tackle retailers and utility companies who charge more for their goods than their counterparts do overseas, and companies face heavy fines if they breach anti-competition rules.....Pages 1, 4

Budget leaflet 'is hiding tax rises'

Gordon Brown's presentation of the Budget was referred to the public spending watchdog amid accusations that the Chancellor was misleading millions of voters. Francis Maude, the Shadow Chancellor, claimed that a leaflet explaining Budget measures to the public, and produced with taxpayers' money, amounted to "Labour Party propaganda".....Pages 1, 10, 11

Prince does the tango

At the height of a delicate mission to mend fences with our former adversary Argentina, the Prince of Wales allowed himself to be lured onto a dance floor to do the tango.....Pages 1, 3

Rapist escapes jail

A rapist who bombarded his victim with threatening letters and set fire to her house escaped from prison, seven months after he was made a "trusted" inmate.....Page 1

Geldof reaps £6m

Bob Geldof and the Labour Peer Lord Waheed Ali are expected to receive up to £6 million each from the sale of their Planet 24 television company to Carlton Communications.....Page 2

Catwalk lures Camilla

Camilla Parker Bowles has joined the ranks of glamorous film stars who frequent international fashion shows.....Page 3

Body left for months

A former model has been found dead in her flat, where her body was left for up to three months. Neighbours claimed that her "friends" continued to use the flat to inject heroin.....Page 3

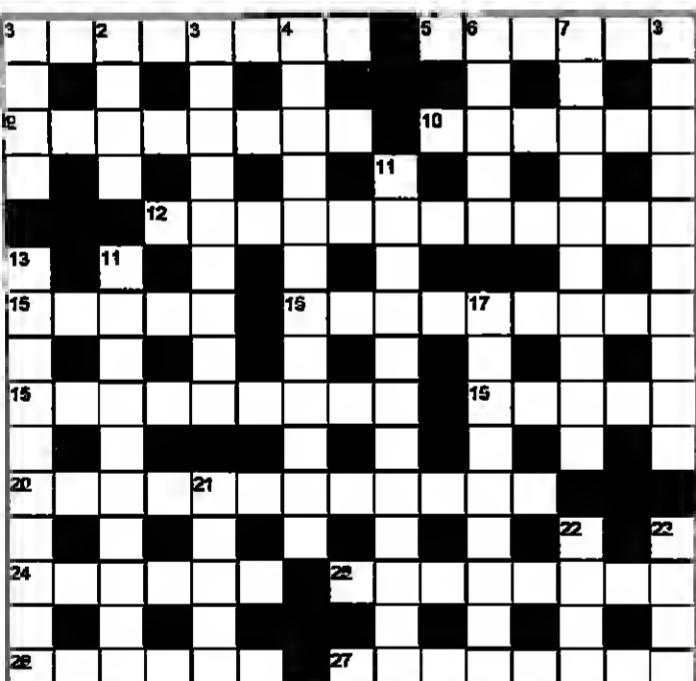
Pollock digitised

Hundreds of photographs and films documenting Jackson Pollock at work on his paintings have been fed into a computer, suggesting that his art was not as abstract as it seems.....Page 5

Hypnosis is last gasp for smokers

If the people who packed a theatre for a display of mass hypnosis are to be believed, 700 men and women gave up smoking yesterday. Cigarette butts littered the pavement outside the New London theatre as hundreds of smokers took what they hoped would be their last nicotine fix while queuing to see the hypnotist Paul McKenna.....Page 7

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 21,048



ACROSS
1 Desire a piano, small and dainty (8).
5 A way into mine over the hill (4,2).
9 Toughened girl got better after ditching husband (8).
10 Empty words in latest song (3,3).
12 Like a few shots of money, shifted into profession (12).
15 Conductor describing Purcell's work for St Cecilia's Day (5).
16 Offensive weapon permit held - what an obscenity (9).
18 Money owed round university, a gambling sum - one was brought to court (9).
19 Boasting about home wins (5).
20 It's rude to stop working without consent (12).

Solution to Puzzle No 21,047

BLUESHIP SERAPH
C N E T L A I
LOCALRADIO COPY
I O E L W K E
VANISHINGCREAM
I C T G O T M
AGELESS CATSPAW
R E C R A
RUNNING SHIVERS
S E T N D O A
UPWARDMOBILITY
A P Y R O G W
CLIP BACKSTITCH
L R O B I O E
SIYINTAX ELECTRION

24 After a short time, firing becomes stressful (6).
25 Strong criticism of ethnic group after assistance is rejected (8).
26 Show hide to vet (6).
27 Advanced in party initially, without much energy (8).

DOWN
1 It's a separate state, unfortunately (4).
2 Knock and slightly wound (4).
3 Doll found in the Easter collection (9).
4 Workers' joint units producing something wonderful (3,4,5).
6 In Asian city, you'll find old marketplace (5).
7 Magic trio moved around clubs, arousing mixed emotions (10).
8 Jeremiah, for one, confused Ted, in short (10).
11 People selfish today - conclusion of my parents' meeting (2,10).
13 Frank married off friends to eligible people (10).
14 Seeing American teenager, policeman soundly beats her (5-5).
17 Central part in Verdi I perform, allowed to take title role (9).
21 Information about a type of painting (5).
22 Green half of fresh town (4).
23 Parking in Paris is a nuisance (4).

Times Two Crossword, page 52

WEATHER INFORMATION

Latest Road and Weather conditions
UK Weather - All regions 0326 444 810
UK Roads - All regions 0326 401 410
N21 0326 401 297
M25 0326 401 297
National Highways 0326 401 760
Cross country roads 0326 401 186
Planning to Heathrow & Gated Airports

Packaged: The Government unveiled measures to help business, especially small business, boost competitiveness.....Page 27

BNP bid: France's banking sector was in shock after Banque Nationale de Paris launched a hostile £2.7 billion bid to take over two of its biggest rivals, Société Générale and Paribas.....Page 27

James Archer: The Swedish author yesterday said that James Archer, the City trader and son of novelist Jefferley, was not authorised to trade on the Stockholm Stock Exchange.....Page 27

Markets: The FTSE 100 index fell 16.50 points to 6221.2. The pound rose 0.23 cents to \$1.6273 and 0.1p against the euro to 67.32p. The sterling index rose to 102.7.....Page 30

London flood plan

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